

A study of the traditional outlook of the
Native Community in the Cameroons Province
of Nigeria, and its impact upon thought and
practice of the Christian Church in that
Province.

by
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Preface

The problem of the impact which the African Cultural Heritage has on the Christian Church in Africa is not a new one and names such as B. Gutmann, E. Smith and D. Westermann will always remain associated with its discussion. Today we live in a time where nationalism and the growing number of independent States and Churches in Africa makes the problem more urgent than it ever was before. There can scarcely be a single missionary who has not been preoccupied by misconceptions of faith and practice in the Church by African Christians. Unfortunately missionaries have too often attempted to explain them in terms of their own Western background and have not subjected them to a proper analysis. The failure to do this has time and again proved costly, and still to-day is one of the greatest obstacles to the real understanding of the Gospel in the African Churches.

The principal thesis of this dissertation is that in so far as the natives of the Cameroons lack the Christian understanding of history they are in continual danger of misconceiving the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

Recent anthropological writings have fully demonstrated that the behaviour of peoples with a tribal heritage cannot be explained in terms of the Western outlook. Such people have their own culture and their own outlook. To appreciate the character of the culture of the Cameroonian tribes it is necessary first of all to know something of their environment and circumstance. Accordingly we have opened this dissertation by presenting a minimum of relevant information about the economic and social context of the life of the peoples in question, together with a sketch of recent political and mission history.

Anthropologists have shown that one of the chief determinants of native community is the mode of social organisation, and, in

particular, the system of reckoning kinship. We have found in the Cameroons that an understanding of the grouping of kinsmen into lineages, and the emphasis placed on the lineage as a unit, is absolutely vital to any understanding of traditional ritual and philosophy, and, moreover, equally vital to the understanding of the outlook of the apparently westernised African. In the light of this fact we have then examined a number of these misconceptions referred to and shown how they arise.

The first part of this dissertation contains a general survey of the area under study and an outline of the traditional structure of Native Society and Religion and Ritual. The second part discusses the impact of this traditional background and of culture contact upon the thought and practice in the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons. We have shown among other things, how the identification of sign and object is carried over into the understanding of the Lord's Supper. We have also shown how the central importance attached in traditional society to lineage organisation, and the association between the lineage and the ancestral spirits, is carried over into the sphere of the Church and therefore leads many to understand the Church as a new social entity, conceived analogous to their tribe. Furthermore we have demonstrated how the understanding of self and of community is bound up with the understanding of history. In discussing Baptism, Ethics and Church Discipline we have indicated how the impact of the traditional outlook is bound to lead to misconceptions if it is not replaced by the biblical understanding of history and of self which is the basis of the New Testament Kerygma.

There are two points for which the author must apologise: The first one is that in reporting on such a vast area covering so many

tribes the danger of generalisation could not be avoided. But for the purpose of our subject, in which we are concerned with dominant attitudes and not with peculiarities of one particular tribe or clan, the area covered can, as far as we can judge, be taken as one cultural entity. The second point concerns the language. We have used Duala as an ethnographic language and have by doing this done something an anthropologist would not be allowed to do. Duala is the language used in the Presbyterian Church of this District and even if it is only understood by a minority of the total population, we still thought it suitable for our purpose to use it. We also know that the proverbs quoted are widely understood in our area.

The author has been in the Cameroons twice: from 1952 - 1955 and 1956 - 1959 and stayed at Buea, Manyemen, Nyasoso, Mamfe and Kumba for various periods of time.

The phonetic symbols employed in the text are as follows: o and e have been used for the closed vowels and o and e for the open vowels; ɲ indicates the palatal nasal and ŋ the velar nasal sound.

Citations from African writings have been recorded verbatim without corrections.

The preparation of this dissertation has been supervised by the Rev. Prof. W.S. Tindal of the Department of Christian Ethics, and Dr. K.L. Little, Head of the Department of Social Anthropology, to both of whom I am indebted for a number of suggestions and for valuable advice as to the presentation of the material. Further valuable advice was received from Dr. M. Banton of the Social Sciences Research Centre and Dr. M.J. Ruel of the Department of Social Anthropology.

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Part 1.

T H E

B A C K G R O U N D

CHAPTER I

A Survey of the Country, its People and their History.

Par. 1. A General View

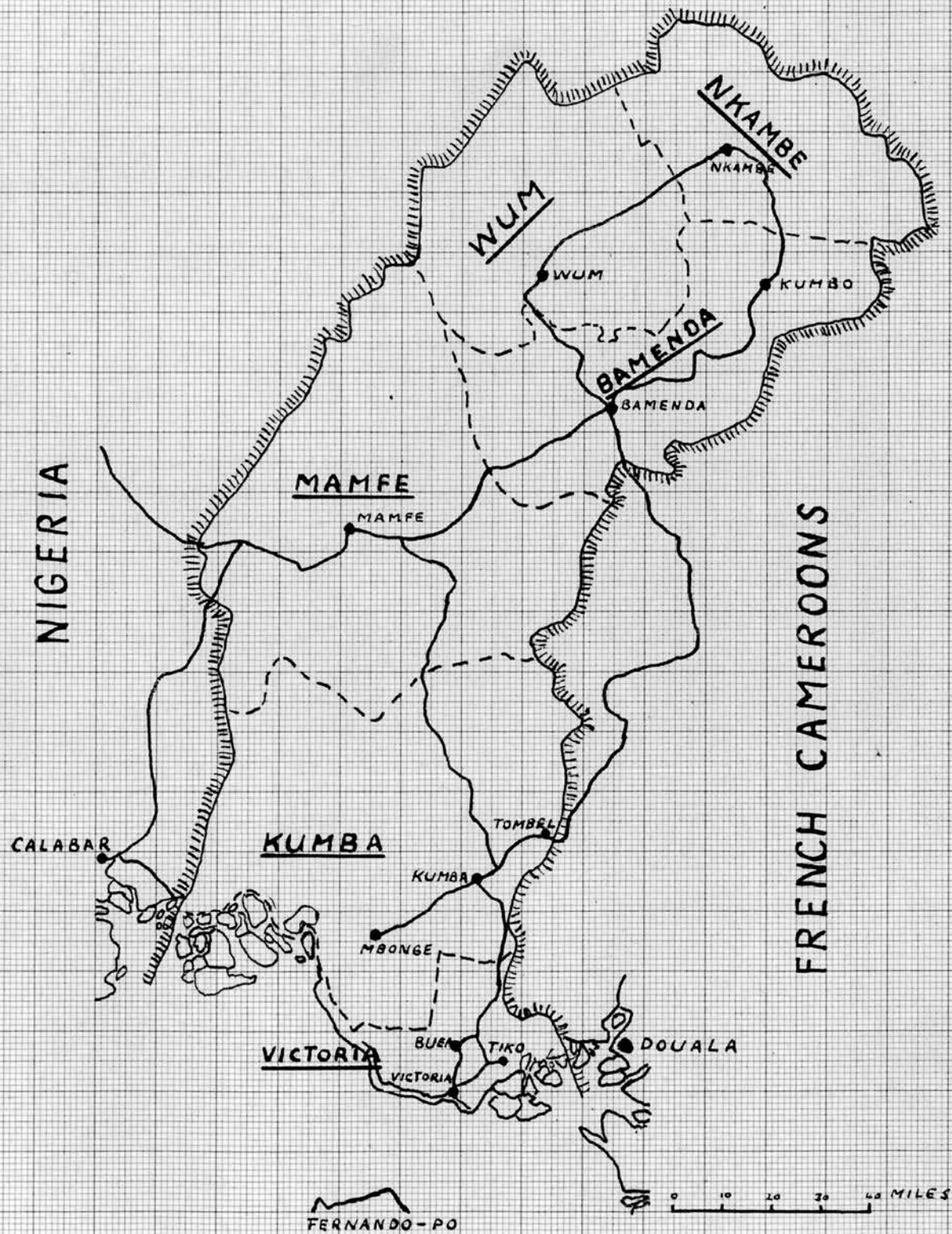
1. The Geographical Position.

The country extends as a narrow strip between the French Cameroons and Eastern Nigeria. The Cameroons province with which we are concerned is divided into three divisions lying one behind the other.¹ The whole land is very hilly, in some places even mountainous. Thus, there rises immediately behind the coastal town of Victoria the 13,350 foot Cameroon Mountain. This huge mountain is a volcano, the last eruption of which took place in 1922.² The streams of lava poured down to the sea, and the broad stripes may still be seen where they flowed across the beach. Behind the Cameroon Mountain a range of hills stretches along the Calabar frontier. On the heights of Kumba, on the other side of Mongo, towards the French frontier, lies the 6,791 foot Kupe, and behind it the 7,382 foot Manenguba.

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- 1) Since the separation of the Cameroons from the Eastern Regions of Nigeria, the whole district, which includes the former Cameroons and Bamenda Province, is called "Southern Cameroons". See Map No. 1.
 - 2) In the summer of 1954 renewed activity on the part of the volcano was confirmed; but it did not amount to a discharge of lava. A new eruption took place in 1959 and a stream of lava is flowing down the mountain slope while this is being written.

SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

MAP I.



Between these chains of hills lie the hilly lowlands, mostly covered with tropical forest. At the coast we find mangrove swamps with their labyrinth of waterways.

Our province is partitioned into three divisions, which bear the names of their chief towns: Victoria, Kumba and Mamfe. A road runs through the country, connecting these three chief towns. From Victoria to Kumba, the distance is 65 miles, and from Kumba to Mamfe 120 miles. In Mamfe the road forks. One branch leads on to Ikom and the other up to Bamenda. Another road goes from Kumba via Tombol to the French Cameroons. Further highroads connect Victoria with Bota, Tiko and Buea. In addition to these highroads there are quite a number of secondary roads, provided by the Native Administrations. There are no railways, apart from the narrow gauge tracks on the plantations, which, however, are only for the use of the owners.

Victoria is the port. Only smaller ships, such as Elder's and Fyffe's banana boat on their regular runs, can reach Tiko through the mangrove swamps. The climate is marked above all by heavy and frequent rainfall.¹ The luxuriant forest in the lowlands retains the moisture, so that a heavy, sultry atmosphere results. Whenever one goes higher, however, the climate improves

1) Debunscha, some 15 miles from Victoria, is one of the wettest places in the world. In 1946, 494 inches was registered. (U.N. Report 1948, p.151).

immediately. In the Cameroons, as on the whole West Coast, there is a rainy season and a dry season. The rainy season lasts approximately from May to October; near the coast it lasts longer, and in the inland districts for a shorter time.

2. Health.

The climate, the luxuriant vegetation and the situation are very favourable for the hatching and growth of the greatest variety of insects, many of which are known to be carriers of tropical diseases. Since sanitary conditions are almost everywhere bad, it is not surprising that so many diseases are prevalent, and are constantly being carried afresh.

3. Demography.

It seems that the tribal groups in our district have not been very long in the places which they now inhabit. Furthermore, we have in this relatively small country a great many small tribes, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say remnants of tribes. It looks as if the weaker of these Bantu tribes had been forced up to the North-West by the stronger, and that there, in the comparatively barren region of the Cameroon Mountains they had settled down.

These tribes do not even possess a common language, and must therefore mostly make themselves understood to one another in pidgin English. Linguistically they belong to the group classified by Greenberg¹ as the central branch of the Niger-Congo family which includes the groups previously known as Bantu and semi-Bantu.

1) Studies in Linguistic Classification.

The Tribes of the three Divisions.¹

<u>Victoria</u>	<u>Kumba</u>	<u>Mamfe</u>
Bakweri	Bafaw	Assumbo
Balong	Bakossi	Bangwa
Bambuko	Bakundu	Banyang
Clans of Victoria	Balong	Kembong
Federation (mainly	Balundu	Mbo
of Duala and	Bamuko	Mbulu
Bakweri stock)	Basossi	Menka
	Mbonge	Mundani
	Ngolo	Takamanda
	Batanga	Widekum
	Korup	

Population.²

<u>District</u>	<u>Area</u> <u>Sq. Miles</u>	<u>Population</u> <u>Both Sexes</u>	<u>No. of People</u> <u>per Sq. Mile</u>
Cameroons	9,649	323,686	33.6.
Kumba Divi- sion	4,162	137,760	33.1.
Mamfe Divi- sion	4,321	100,422	23.2.
Victoria Division	1,166	85,504	73.3.

1) U.N. Report 1953 p. 2-3.

2) All the figures are taken from the population census of the Eastern Regions of Nigeria 1953: Bulletins No. 1. and No. 5.

Sexes

<u>District</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>No of Males per 1,000 Females</u>
Cameroons Province	180,093	143,593	1,254
Kumba Division	76,690	61,070	1,256
Mamfe Division	47,804	52,618	909
Victoria Division	55,699	29,905	1,859 ¹

Religious Affiliations: (Percentages of the Population)

<u>District</u>	<u>Christian</u>	<u>Mohammedan</u>	<u>Others</u>
Cameroons Province	54.5	1.00	44.5
Kumba Division	68.1	0.8	31.1
Mamfe Division	20.1	0.5	79.4
Victoria Division	72.8	2.2	25.0

Literacy: (Percentages of the Population)

<u>District</u>	<u>Standard II² and over</u>	<u>Others able to write Roman script</u>
Cameroons Province	10.1	5.2
Kumba Division	9.5	6.1
Mamfe Division	5.0	2.2
Victoria Division	16.3	6.8

4. The Economic Situation.

The soil is in general poor. It consists chiefly of Laterite covered with a very thin layer of humus. Exceptions occur, however, in the regions of the Kupe Mountains and round the Cameroon

-
- 1) This number is so high, because of the big plantations in this Division which receive their migratory labour force from the other Divisions. It is obvious that this situation has its peculiar problems.
 - 2) These figures have considerably increased since the census was taken.

Mountains. For the most part the farms prosper, but, since fertilisers are unknown, the soil soon becomes impoverished, and a new location must be found for the farm. This is quite easy owing to the thinly populated nature of the country.

The staple crops are bananas, casava, plantains and yams.

The production of maize and groundnuts is also very common, and oil palms grow everywhere. Cocoa is found, particularly in the Kumba area, and in the lower part of Mamfe Division, while coffee is planted in Bakosi, and rice in the Dikume region. The government is doing much to combine separate enterprises into corporations for the purchase and export of the products.

In Victoria Division and round Kumba lie the modern plantations of the Cameroons Development Corporation (C.D.C.) which, with their labour force of 24,970 in 1953, play an important part in the life of the coastal areas.

Par. 2. Language.

1. The Problem.

We explained that in the Cameroons we do not have one large tribal group, but a great number of small tribes. This naturally makes it difficult to establish a written language that can be used by everybody. The individual tribes are too small to justify the creation of their own literature, except possibly in the case of a few short writings. None of them occupies such a prominent position that the others would be willing to accept its language as their written language.

From the very outset, therefore, missionary work in the

Cameroons was faced by the difficult question: Shall we give the people of the Cameroons a European or an African tongue as their written language?

As we saw it, the answer turned upon whether a language could be sufficiently well understood to guarantee the teaching of spiritual and religious topics in the best possible way.

The following may serve as an example of "feeling at home" in a language. A Scottish schoolboy, when learning French, Latin or Greek, will recognise in these languages the same grammatical structure as is to be found at the base of his own mother-tongue. The same is also true of the formation of the language, and of the historical background bound up with it. Supposing this boy learns Hebrew, however. He will discover that the grammar is completely different, and that the word formation comes from quite a different background. The result is that he will have much greater difficulty in "feeling at home" in this Semitic language which forms such an absolute contrast to the aforementioned Indo-Germanic tongues.

The three most important determinants of linguistic comprehensibility appeared to be:

1. Grammatical relationship of the languages.
2. Descent of the word-formation from a similar social and cultural source.
3. The same historical tradition.

Anyone who has heard speeches delivered by Africans, or has had to read letters written by them knows very well the significance of these three factors. On all these counts the first missionaries

decided to use a Cameroon dialect as written language. Their choice fell on Duala.

2. The Duala Language.

The Duala tribe have lived, ever since the Cameroons became known to the whites, at the mouth of the Wuri River. They were thus the earliest people to come in contact with the European traders whose ships lay at anchor near their settlements. Soon the major part of the carrying trade with the interior was in the hands of these intelligent people. When the first missionary, A. Saker, reached this district, he concentrated upon his study of the Duala language, producing in 1855 "The Elements of Dualla" and later, parts of a "Dualla Grammar" and a "Dictionary of the Dualla Language". On account of their position as middlemen, a very lively interchange with tribes from far up country was maintained. This automatically led to their language becoming known. Later on the town of Duala became a centre of trade and industry, drawing thousands of workers from the inland areas, and this helped still further in the spread of the language.

When, in the year 1886, the work of the Baptist Mission was taken over by the Basel Mission, the latter also took over Duala as the educational and Church language.

All the dialects in our area are Bantu or semi-Bantu tongues and, for the most part, closely related to Duala. So that when the mission field was further and further extended, Duala was also introduced in our area as the educational and church language.

The Church has a Duala Bible and Hymnbook. Furthermore, quite

a number of theological books have been written or translated into Duala.

Par. 3. The Impact from Outside.

In this section we shall consider some of those organisations and other outside influences which most affect the people and the land, and cause changes in the structure of society.

1. The Government:

Through its different departments the government plays a very important part in the transformation of all spheres of life.

First of all let us consider briefly how it works, and how it tries to prepare the natives for taking over responsibility, and for ultimate autonomy.

Local Government in the Territory is the responsibility of native authorities, who receive guidance and advice from Administrative and Departmental Officers.

Generally speaking, where there is a strong tribal consciousness, or a long tradition of political organisation, the native authorities are the traditional executive authority, but where there is no natural authority possessing executive power over a wider area than the village, the native authority system is a new construction rather than an adaptation of native machinery. The existing native authorities were built up after careful enquiry in each case into the basis of traditional authority. Where chiefs, or chiefs and councils, formed the recognised authority, they became the native authority. Where the hereditary principle did not operate, the representatives of the extended families or groups were formed into councils in such manner as the people desired, and given statutory powers as native authorities.

Native authorities and native courts take cognisance of local law and custom, but do not interfere with them except in so far as they may be deemed repugnant to natural justice and morality, or conflict with the provisions of a government ordinance. All other cases go before the Magistrate.

The Public Works Department (P.W.D.) undertakes the building and maintenance of roads and public buildings. The country continues to acquire through this branch of the Government more and more modern machines and tools.

Since by far the greatest proportion of the inhabitants of the lands are farmers, the Agricultural Department naturally plays an important role. All possible ways and means are tried to improve the harvests, to conserve the soil, and to fight erosion. The Government Service includes a Co-operative Department, and, especially in our part of the territory, co-operative principles have a widespread appeal. Establishments connected with hygiene, including the hospitals and dispensaries (where these are not supported by one of the Missions) are built and kept up by the Health Department. All schools are under the control of the Education Department, and are financially assisted by the Government in so far as they conform to the regulations.

2. The Missions

Three Missions are active in our district, as follows:

<u>Mission</u>	<u>Adherents</u> ¹
Roman Catholic	29,743
Cameroons Baptist	2,500
Basel	19,505

1) U.N. Report, 1953, p.63.

All three include in their Church programme medical and educational work. Over and above this the Basel Mission runs bookshops in the chief towns of the territory.

3. Trade.

The United Africa Co. Ltd., (U.A.C.) and John Holt, Liverpool, are the two main trading houses, which, through their wholesale departments, sell goods to the native traders who then transport them to the most remote parts of the country. The above will give a rough idea of the chief Western organisations and their branches.

4. Africans of non-Cameroon nationality.

The influence exercised by Africans from outside our district is particularly strong in the towns. Thousands of workers from Bamenda Province are employed in the plantations. In general one can say that the indigenous workers show less initiative, and are constitutionally less strong, than those from other territories. This fact has already led to serious conflicts of interest.

Here is a statement of the numbers of those of Nigerian stock who were resident in the Cameroons province in 1953.¹

Ibo	25,180
Ibibio	10,251
Ijaw	5,796
Fulani	324
Hausa	1,140
Tiv	1,712
Yoruba	934

1) Population Census of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, 1953
Bulletin No. 1.

Par. 4. The History of the Cameroons.

1. Before and during German Rule.

In the 15th century Portuguese seamen sailed the coasts and carried on trade with the natives. These traders purchased thousands of slaves from the Cameroons, and shipped them to the West. Later on the Dutch, and seafarers of other nationalities, also dealt in slaves. Up to this very day many geographical designations along the coast remind us of the Portuguese; for example, Ambas Bay, called after the Ambozos, who lived at that time on the mountain slopes; also the Rio del Rey, further to the West; also the Bay of Biafra, called after a large town of those days. Take the name "Cameroons" itself, for instance. The Portuguese called the wide mouth of the chief river (Wuri) which from time to time swarmed with enormous numbers of reddish crabs, the Rio del Cameroes, or River of Crabs. From Cameroes came the English name Cameroons, and later the German Kamerun.¹ To begin with the name applied only to the basin at the mouth of the Cameroon River (Wuri), but was later transferred to Duala at the sea. Then in the course of time the name was transmitted to the whole German colony.

The English and German trading companies began round about 1860 to carry on trade with the Duala, who had the whole carrying trade with the interior in their hands, and naturally derived great

1) Max Buchner: Kamerun, p. 4.

Züller: Die deutschen Besitzungen, Vol.III,
p. 193 ff.

profit from it. The export and import figures of both the German and English firms were much the same. On various occasions the kings round about Duala requested Britain to take over the protection of their country and interests. Mr. Gladstone was for a long time undecided about this owing to commitments elsewhere. Meanwhile the Germans, who, along with the British, held the greatest interests in the Cameroons, had not been idle. A race for the possession of the colony ensued, which cannot exactly be numbered among the more glorious pages of world History. It ended with the Germans taking over the Cameroons on July 14th 1884. Buea was selected as the capital of the colony, and the Governor took up residence there. Kumba became a government station, as also did Ossidinge, in Mamfe Division. In 1904 an insurrection broke out round Ossidinge, as a result of which the government station was removed to Mamfe in 1909.

Up to the outbreak of war in 1914 the Germans were very active in opening up the interior of the Cameroons to trade and civilising influences.

2. From 1918 to the present day.

By arrangement which came into effect on 18th April, 1916, the Cameroons was provisionally divided into British and French spheres. In this way the Cameroons-Province, together with other territories, came under British control. By Article 119 of the Peace Treaty with Germany, signed at Versailles on June 28th, 1919, Germany renounced, in favour of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, all her rights over the Cameroons. The Powers agreed that

the Governments of France and Great Britain should make a joint recommendation to the League of Nations as to the future of the territory. They recommended that a mandate to administer, in accordance with Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, that part of the Cameroons lying to the West of the line agreed upon in the declaration of July 10th, 1919, should be conferred upon His Britannic Majesty. The terms of the mandate were defined by the Council of the League of Nations in a document conferring the mandate, dated 20th July, 1922.

In accordance with the Trusteeship Agreement, the Administration of the trust territory is integrated with the administration of the adjoining areas of the Protectorate of Nigeria. It therefore shares with Nigeria a common legislative and judicial system. Up to 1954, the Cameroons formed an integral part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. They were then separated, and have since become a region by themselves in the Federation of Nigeria under the name of the Southern Cameroons, which includes Cameroons and Bamenda Province.

Par. 5. History and Aim of the Basel Mission in the Cameroons.

1. The Baptist Mission up to 1884.

In the year 1841 the English Baptists began missionary work on the island of Fernando Po which lay off our area.

In 1842 they formed on this island a small congregation composed of people from Sierre Leone and other colonists. From it

the missionary Merrick undertook the first missionary work attempted on the mainland in Bimbia. In 1845 he was followed by the Missionary Alfred Saker, who is to be reckoned the real pioneer in missionary work on the coastal area between Victoria and Duala.

In the year 1858 the Spanish government by a special decree forbade any further protestant missionary activity in Fernando Po, where in the interval a larger Christian community had grown up. Thereupon Saker obtained a large piece of land on the wide bay of Ambas lying at the foot of the Cameroon mountains, and to it the majority of the members of the congregation were transferred. Saker called the asylum Victoria, in honour of the then English queen.

To avoid if possible a repetition of the experience on Fernando Po, Saker asked the British Government, as sovereign power, for protection for his settlement. This was granted, but the colony was left rather to itself, under the jurisdiction of the Baptist Missionary Society in London.

The mission work was extended under Saker's leadership and he, together with his fellow-workers, worked hard as preacher, translator and printer of God's Word. In 1876 after an activity of 30 years, Saker returned to Great Britain from the Cameroons, and there died on 13th March, 1880.

In 1884 came the taking over of Duala by the Germans, to be

followed a little later by the agreement between Britain and Germany and the consequent handing over of Victoria to the Germans.

2. The Basel Mission.¹

Germany had just become a colonial power, which led to the opening of debates as to the proper use and development of these overseas territories. Naturally the question of the evangelisation of these territories had to come up. By the resolution of a conference held in Bremen, the Basel Mission was asked to take up the work in the Cameroons.

Since the English Baptist Mission was not prepared to continue work under the new conditions, it was imperative that their work should be taken over and continued by another protestant mission. The directors of the Basel Mission at home were not very enthusiastic about this new task, especially because of the considerable loss of life in prospect.² None the less, in accordance with the wish of the Bremen Conference an investigating committee of three men was sent to the Cameroons. Their report reached Basel in March of 1886, and was favourable beyond expectation.

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- 1) The Basel Mission is a protestant mission with its home base chiefly in South Germany, Alsace and Switzerland. The administrative headquarters of the mission is in Basel (Switzerland), hence its name.
 - 2) They had before them the loss that the Gold Coast had cost the mission. W. Schlatter; Geschichte der Basler Mission, Vol. 3. p. 49.

In virtue of the resolution of the Bremen Conference there was sent to the Foreign Office in Berlin a "Petition of the Evangelical Missionary Society in Basel concerning a mission to the heathen in the Cameroons, Basel 1st June, 1886". The beginning of this classic document gives us a good insight into the conditions of the time and shows us the goal set for the missionary work of the Basel Mission.¹

- a. To the exclusion of any political aims the Society has as its goal the planting of Evangelical Christianity among the Heathen and the assembling of the Converts into Christian Congregations.
- b. Through Christian Schools the Society seeks to teach those committed to her care to read the Holy Scriptures and to build up Christian Education in general.
- c. Through higher Schools the Society seeks to educate Teachers and Preachers, and to provide higher education in a Christian Spirit as may be necessary.

-
- 1a) Unter Ausschluss jedes politischen Zweckes verfolgt die Gesellschaft als ihr Ziel die Pflanzung evangelischen Christentums unter den Heiden und Sammlung der Gewonnenen zu evangelisch-christlichen Gemeinden.
 - b) Durch Errichtung christlicher Volksschulen sucht sie ihre Pflegebefohlenen in den Stand zu setzen, die heilige Schrift zu lesen, bestrebt sie sich überhaupt, eine christliche Volksbildung hervorzubringen.
 - c) Durch höhere Schulen sucht sie Lehrer und Prediger aus den Eingeborenen heranzubilden und vorhandenen Bedürfnissen nach höherer Bildung in evangelischem Geiste zu entsprechen.

- d. The Society seeks to cultivate the religious and moral life by the introduction of a Christian Order and Church Discipline in accordance with the doctrine of Holy Scriptures.
- e. The Society desires her Adherents to contribute towards the expenditures of the Christian Congregations, not only to lighten her financial burden, but also to foster the responsibility in the Christians to care for the needs of their Community.
- f. The Society sees it as her duty to preserve the national peculiarities of the people among which she is working except in so far as these peculiarities being heathen must give way to Christian practices. In her Schools she will therefore teach first of all in Vernacular, though without excluding the use of any other language if need arises.

When we later discuss some of the misconceptions occurring among the Christians of the Cameroons, the question may arise whether the teaching, preaching and practice of the Basel Missionaries in the Cameroons has been responsible for the growth of any of these.

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- 2d) Das religiöse und sittliche Leben sucht sie durch Einführung einer christlichen Gemeindeordnung und Handhabung einer christlichen Kirchenzucht nach den Grundsätzen der Heiligen Schrift zu pflegen.
 - e) Nicht nur zur Erleichterung der auf der Gesellschaft liegenden Last, sondern auch um der sittlichen Wirkung willen sucht sie die Christen allmählich zur Bestreitung der Kosten für die Gemeindebedürfnisse zu erziehen.
 - f) Die Gesellschaft achtet es für ihre Pflicht, die nationalen Eigentümlichkeiten der Völker, unter denen sie arbeitet, soweit sie nicht als heidnisch dem Christentum weichen müssen, zu schonen. Sie pflegt daher in ihren Schulen in erster Linie die Volkessprache, ohne dadurch den Unterricht in einer andern Sprache, sofern dafür Bedürfnis ist, auszuschliessen.

Every generation of Christians is naturally involved with its environment with the trend of the philosophical, ethical and theological views of its time. The missionaries coming out to the Cameroons, have been no exception to this. Most of them originated from a pietistic environment, as did almost all the continental missionaries. We may however say, that the legalistic tendencies inherent in the pietistic movement have not been the source of the very strong legalism among the Christians in the Cameroons, they have encouraged its development. However, we are inclined to think that the principles of work laid down in the six paragraphs above would have been acceptable to most of the great Missionary Societies at the time then were formulated.

The directors of the Basel Mission at home were satisfied with the reply of the German Government and the guarantees contained in it. They reached agreement with the Baptist Missionary Society in London about the position of Baptist Christians in the Basel Mission's district: The Basel Mission guaranteed the freedom of conscience in respect of the practice of baptism and secured them in their right to have their children baptised by total immersion when they grew up; on the other hand, with converts won through their own work they intended to introduce infant baptism, and not tolerate any agitation against their teaching and practice.

They hoped that the native teachers and preachers could fit in with the new administration and confine themselves to simple preaching of the Gospel.

On December 23rd 1886 the first four missionaries of the Basel Mission landed at Bethel (Duala). They immediately went to take over the Baptist Mission's stations. To this end they were furnished with letters of recommendation¹ asking a good reception for them, and that the taking-over should be without friction.

Since the Baptists had not been managing their Cameroon's missionfield well in the final years before the transfer, all manner of abuses, (especially trading in brandy), though excluded by their church discipline, had slipped into the congregations. After the Basel Mission took over they were unwilling to submit to the more stringent church discipline. This led in part to the separation of these congregations.

The congregation in Victoria withdrew also.² The special conditions obtaining in the little free-state were a contributory cause; the colonists, who had been settled in Victoria by Saker, and who had so long exercised unrestricted rule over the native population (Bakweri) were displeased that the Germans were preparing to bring their pride of position to an end. It was to them intolerable to sit alongside the "common niggers" of the Bakweri tribe

- 1) Letter of the secretary of the Baptists Mission to recommend Rev. Munz to the congregation and to the Missionary at Bethel Station, 29th October, 1886; in Akten betreffend die Uebernahme der Kamerun-Mission 1885-88.
- 2) In Victoria at the time of the transfer the Congregations numbered 32 Communicants and about 80 scholars (boys and girls). (Akten betreffend die Uebernahme der Kamerun-Mission 1885-88)

in a congregation, not to hear the Gospel in their own language, and to have to allow their children to be taught in Duala. They demanded that the Basel Mission should treat them, for the purposes of church and school, as a community on their own, speaking first English, later German. The missionaries found themselves unable to accede to these requests.

Amid difficult circumstances to begin with, and heavy loss of life,¹ the work proceeded inland from the stations at Duala and Victoria. By 1914, 17 further stations occupied by white mission workers had been built.

The extension of the work made swift progress but, partly due to its very rapidity spiritual depth was lacking.²

The schools were also taken over from the Baptist Mission and extended. By 1897 such progress had been made in the organisation of schools, that a missionary had to be appointed as inspector of schools. In 1898 the opening of a Seminary took place in Bonaberi; it was transferred in the following year to Euea. In the same year the middle-school in Lobetal, and the first girls' school in Bonaku³ were also opened. In 1899 the Mission opened a middle-school in

- 1) By 1896, of the 49 missionaries and the 14 wives of missionaries who had gone to the Cameroons 14 men and 5 wives had died there. (E. Kellerhals; Das Volk hinterm Berg. p.95)
- 2) G. Bizer: Referat vor der allgemeinen Brüder-Konferenz in Bonaku 6-8 November 1900. (Akten Kamerun 1900.) Bizer said that the number debarred from the Lord's Supper because of church discipline was much too high. In the five years from 1896-1900 the average debarred was 8%. See also "Ueber die Bekehrung unserer Christen": Protokoll der allgemeinen Brüderkonferenz: Bonaku, 25 März 1908. (Akten Kamerun 1908 I.) K. Stolz: "Bericht über die letzten 10 Jahre"; "20 März 1908. (Akten Kamerun 1908 I.) He says: The congregations have become congregations of women, far too many men have had to be excommunicated.
- 3) F. Raaflaub: Gibt uns Lehrer: Geschichte und Gegenwartsaufgabe der Basler Missionschulen in Kamerun, p. 7.

Bonaku (Duala), which was transferred in the following year to Bonaberi. The mission was also concerned to establish a good standard of craftsmanship. A carpenter and a blacksmith were sent to Duala in 1887 to build up a technical school. Attempts were also made with brickmaking, sawing and carpentry; suitable premises were obtained in 1893, but only the teaching in carpentry developed satisfactorily.¹

A further branch of the Mission's work before the first world war deserves notice; it is that of the Mission's trading company.² At the foundation of the Basel Mission in the Cameroons, the committee in Basel established a supply-centre to meet the missionaries' needs. Since other Europeans, and natives also, made generous use of this favourable opportunity of supplying their needs, a widespread desire grew up among missionworkers in the Cameroons in the course of the years for a trading establishment of their own.

The Committee presented them with the Mission trading company, which in 1898 took over the business in the Cameroons on its own account, with the firm name "Basler Missionshandlung in Kamerun". In 1900 the export of the products of the interior was begun and the management of the industrial factories was taken over from the Mission. In 1903 the Company, in order to supply a good cheap drink for Europeans and natives, and so reduce the trade in spirits, took in hand the manufacture of soda-water and lemonade. In 1904 the Mission's supply-centre in Victoria was taken over by the Trading Company and this led to the establishment of an independent branch there.

1) W. Schlatter: *ibid*, p. 241.

2) *ibid*. p. 328-330.

The missions trading business enjoyed busy custom from black and white as a result of its principle: good wares at a cheap price.

To train the natives in thrift, the Company established a Savings Bank in Duala, in which deposits received interest at 4%. It took some time for the people to become used to this arrangement.

For the medical mission a doctor came in 1907 to Duala, where, in Bonaku, he received his patients in very modest accommodation.

The Basel Mission had on different occasions to assert the natives' rights before the government. The Bakweri especially, who inhabit the fertile country between Victoria and Buea were protected from almost total expulsion from their land by the Mission. The import of brandy was also reduced somewhat owing to representations made by the Mission, which drew attention to its demoralising effects. Both matters were carried by the Mission to the German Reichstag.¹

The work was in full swing when in 1914 the first World War broke out and British and French troops marched into the country.

1) Annual Report of Buea Mission Station 1897 (Akten Kamerun 1897). Brief der Westafrikanischen Pflanzungsgesellschaft "Victoria"; vom 19 Maerz 1900. (Akten Kamerun 1900) Briefe des Auswärtigen Amtes Berlin, Koloniale Abteilung über die Regelung der Landfrage in Kamerun (Akten Kamerun 1904 I.) Protokoll des Deutschen Reichstages; 21. Sitzung vom 22. November 1889 über die Branntweinfrage in Kamerun (Akten Kamerun 1889). Schlatter: *ibid* p. 303ff.

The German missionaries were interned and the Swiss obliged to leave. Inevitably, some of the teachers left their posts, since they now received no salary, the work in the congregations came to a standstill, since the congregations were completely dependent on their own resources and no native church officials had by that time been appointed. A good number of the native workers remained true to the work; but in many places the chapels broke down, the congregations disintegrated, the churches were in part closed and the Christians relapsed into their old heathen beliefs and practices.

Then the strange thing happened: without visible stimulus from outside, without the impact of a missionary from Europe, large parts of the country inland were gripped by a revival originating among themselves.

Unfortunately this movement had almost died out in the territory in which we are interested by the time the first missionaries returned in 1925.¹

As a result of the peace treaty both spheres of interest in the Cameroons, the English and the French, became Mandates. In the French part, the Paris Mission took over from the Basel Mission as early as 1917. In 1924 the British mandate authorities allowed the Basel Mission to return to the territory under their jurisdiction; and the first three missionaries arrived at Tiko on March 3rd, 1925.²

1) E. Kellerhals: a.a.O. p. 104.ff.

2) H. Wildi: Annual Report 1925.

After long journeys through the whole country to gather information they ascertained the damage that had been ^{done} through the long abandonment.¹ Everywhere heathendom was powerfully at work again, and the Christians who still remained had many difficulties to contend with. The total picture was described as the "ruins of a building after an earthquake".² The work of the church and the school system had to be slowly rebuilt.

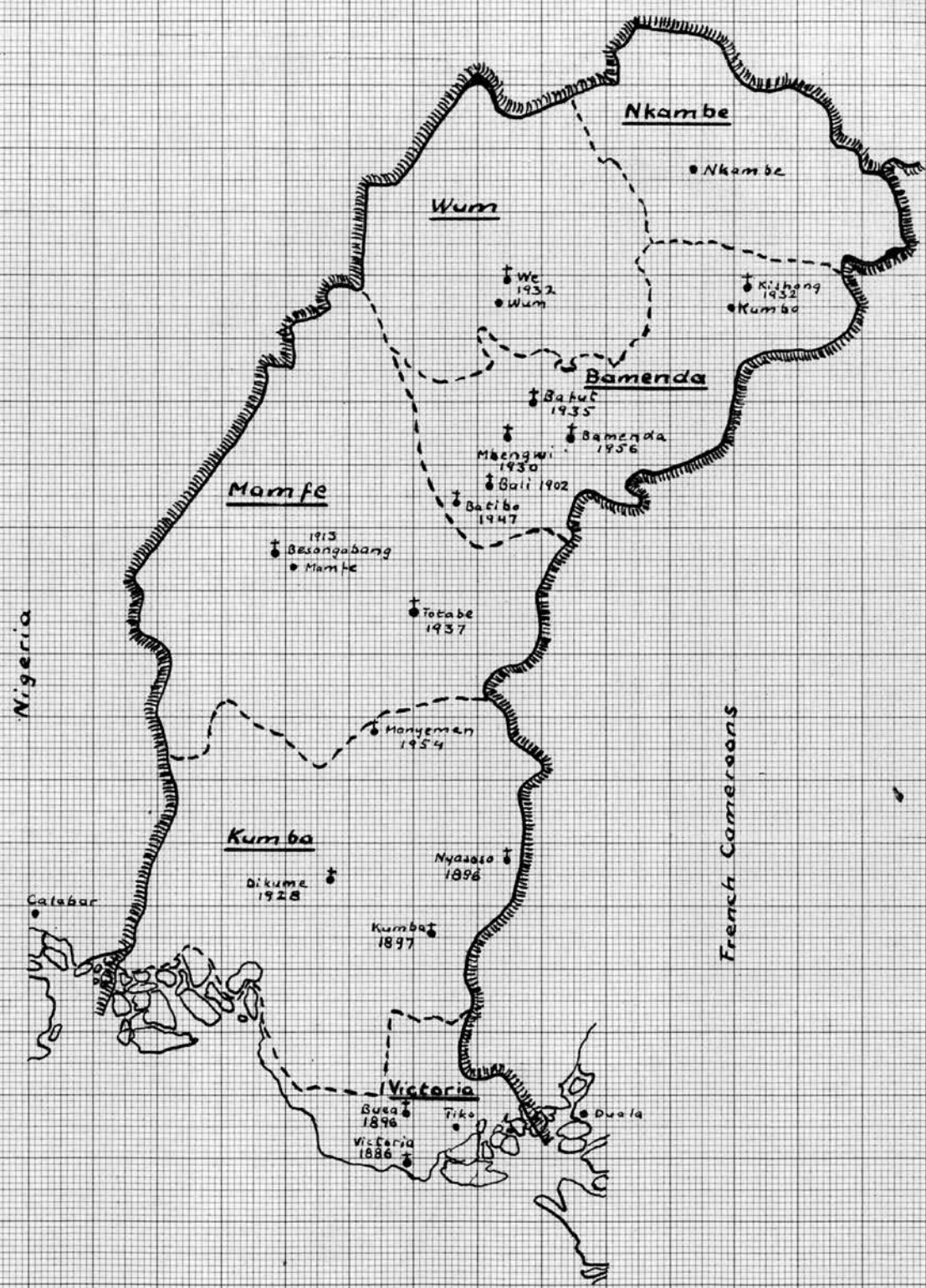
In 1935 the Church received a new constitution³ laying down the form of church government which remained effective until the introduction of the new Constitution in 1957, according to which the Basel Mission Church became the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons.

When the second World War broke out in 1939, the German missionaries were once again interned. This time the Swiss were able to continue their work, so that in spite of the reduction in the number of missionaries, work could go forward.

Since the second World War the Secondary School in Bali, the Teacher Training Centre in Batibo, the Rural Training Centre in Fotabe the Leprosy Settlement in Manyemen and the Marriage Training Centre in Bafut have been built.

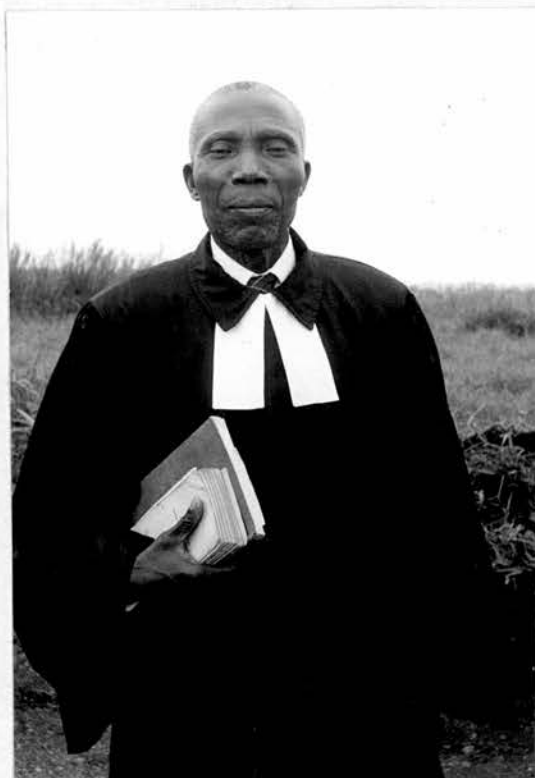
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- 1) H. Wildi: Annual Report 1925
E. Wunderli: Annual Report 1925.
F. Baertschi: Annual Report 1926
 - 2) E. Kellerhals: a.a.O. p. 105.
 - 3) Betesedi ba Mwemba m'evangelisi o Kamerun:
 6th February, 1935.

MAP 2.



Basal Mission Stations

† station
Divisions



Cameroonian Pastor

Rev. P. Esoka, Kumba

Within the group of native co-workers in Church and School are reflected all the difficulties to which this land has been subject since the occupation of the Cameroons by the Germans. The majority of the teachers and preachers could not be properly trained for their work, because the field has become ever greater, yet places for training have not been able to keep pace with the demand. A further factor has been the change of colonial government after 1914, and the change of Language it has brought about. In 1930 a Seminary for Catechists, embracing today a three years' course, was opened.¹

The first pastors to be ordained were Joh. Deibol in 1901 and Modi Din, Jos. Kuo and Joseph Ekolo in 1912. From time to time pastors and catechists were sent on short courses. In 1952 the Theological School at Nyasoso was opened where Ministers are now trained; the course lasts three years.

1) F. Raaflaub: Gebt uns Lehrer, p. 168.

CHAPTER 2.

The Traditional Structure of Native Society in the Cameroons.

Par. 6. Introduction.

For two reasons it is extraordinarily difficult to go into details in this chapter.

The first difficulty consists in the fact that we have before us not one cultural group whose customs and regulations are everywhere the same, but numerous small tribes whose customs and regulations, though the same in the main, often differ in detail. It is therefore impossible to avoid the dangers inherent in generalisation.

The second difficulty is that which confronts all anthropological investigations. We do not have an undisturbed community before us, but a community whose institutions and laws have for generations been under the influence of completely extraneous elements.

In this connection Malinowski very truly says:¹ "The figment of the "uncontaminated" Native has to be dropped from research in field and study. The cogent reason for this is that the "uncontaminated" Native does not exist anywhere. The man of science has to study what is, and not what might have been. When his main

1) Malinowski: The Dynamics of Culture Change, pp. 2-3.

interest lies in the reconstruction of the tribal past, he still has to study the Native as he is now, affected by Western influence. Only on the basis of what remains of the old culture, as well as by tapping the memories of old informants and by scanning old records, can he infer the pre-existing tribal conditions and proceed to the reconstruction of the past."

Men in the Cameroons no longer live in the old self-contained community of their fathers. Here, as in all Africa, the old order has been disturbed by forces from outside which are leading to complete dissolution, the reason being that the authority and power that created and supported this order is no longer recognised by many people. Some of these exogenous forces can be briefly enumerated here:

The strongest force has been the political encroachment of the West with its completely different view of justice, and its general freedom to travel which has made it possible for individuals to leave the home of their ancestors, and settle elsewhere for varying periods of time.

Further, the economic function of the lineage has been greatly altered by the plantations and European trading firms and this in most districts has led to the breakdown of the economically self-sufficient communities in which the traditional customs were meaningful. Lastly, the church must also be cited; for it tries to keep its members from the ancestor-cult, from secret societies and magic practices, and in this way contributes to the decay of the old order.

Although we do not have an undisturbed community before us in the Cameroons we shall try to give a picture of traditional life as it used to be, and as it still is in backward areas. This information is of great importance for the understanding of our thesis. For even if in open areas which have partly been Christianised the outward features of traditional life have partly disappeared to the untrained eye, the psychological underground and with it the general outlook on life and cosmology remain almost unchanged.

In backward areas there still is an almost complete interdependence of all departments of life. There is no division between the economic, social and religious sides of life, for these too form a complete whole. The life of the family is deeply permeated by the idea that its members are caught up into an all-embracing order, which as an undivided entity rules over the world in general and, more particularly, the lineage and social life of the individual. Therefore the ruling interest in life is to maintain the social harmony, continuity and well-being. In this connection there arises, as Kraemer¹ says, a kind of thinking that can be described as follows: It is "totalitarian", it is classificatory and it is steeped in a cosmic-mythological view of the totality of existence. It is a type of monistic thinking, which is more adequately understood when it is conceived as a primitive

1) The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World: p. 151-152.

pattern of philosophy and science than as religion".

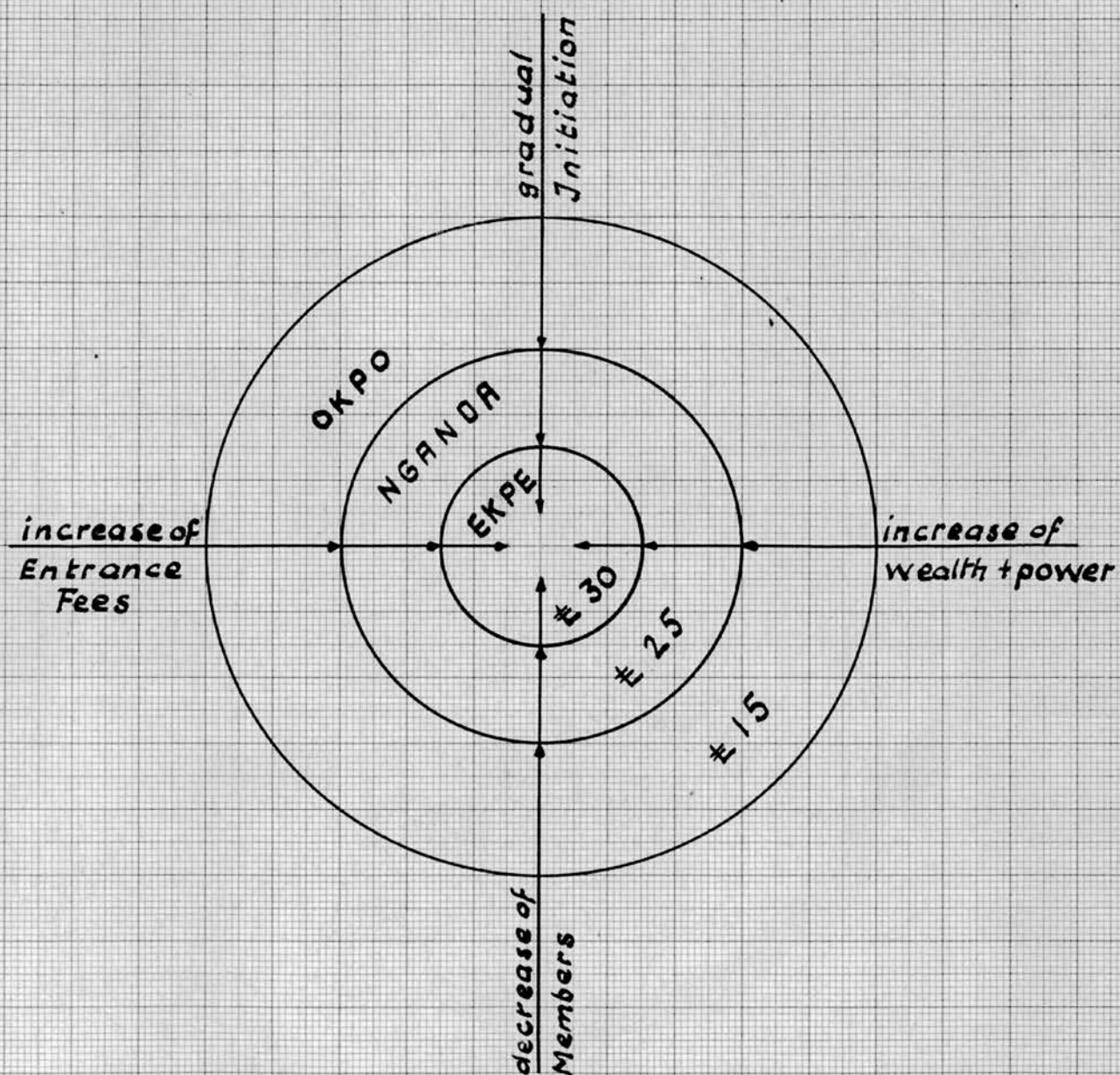
"By 'totalitarian' thinking is meant in an unreflective spontaneous way it starts from the conception of totality and of unbroken, primeval unity, which comprises and dominates the whole range of reality in nature and human life with all its distinctions, nuances and correspondencies. This thoroughly synthetic and concrete way of thinking has the opposite tendency from the analysing, isolating way of modern, scientific thinking. One might therefore more adequately call it emotional thinking, because thinking is in this case not yet the abstract, differentiated activity of the human mind as we, not wholly correctly, assume it to be in philosophical thought; but it is the activity of the thinking, willing and feeling animal that man is in common life. Its dominant interest is not to analyse and isolate, but to arrange and classify, to determine the place and rank that everything has in the totality of things as this is conceived. Here again it appears why it is legitimate and to the point to call this 'totalitarian' and classificatory thinking the primitive form of philosophy and science; for in it gods and men, natural phenomena and social institutions, the sexes and the social classes, animals and plants, water and land, mountains and plains and so many things more, have their place and rank and defined interrelation in the whole cosmic human order. It is, like every other kind of philosophy and science, a great attempt to master the world, doing it in this case by classificatory systems."

We shall now enquire into the basis and starting point of this natural, primitive, monistic type of thinking.¹ It has its origin in the implicit assumption, that man and nature are essentially one; man is in his whole being, and in his potentialities, a part of nature just like the other parts. Nature and her changes form the permanent pattern in it and the source of the meaning of life and of its questions. There are in this primitive view of existence no absolute contrasts. The flow of nature is cyclic. It is continual return, a swinging between the two poles of life and death which are only in a relative sense opposites. Life springs in reality from death, for there is no real death; everything is regarded together as one entirety.

In this monism there is no decision, no either - or; each being has its right in the cosmic harmony. It is only a question of keeping ones appropriate place in the whole, or of occupying it again, when one has left it. The individual understands, and, above all, feels himself, as a part of this unity which comprises the whole of nature. History in the sense of the beginning and goal of time and cosmos, does not exist for him. The behaviour that results from this understanding of self is directed towards the maintenance of the group - primarily the lineage, but in the second and third place the clan and the tribe - and to the re-enactment of the harmony that exists throughout nature.

1) See Animismus, Magie und Allmacht der Gedanken. p. 86 - 112 by Sigmund Freud.

The following description of the traditional structure of native society, religion and ritual seeks above all to explain the life and beliefs of the individual in traditional Cameroons culture, for fundamentally similar conceptions underlie the thoughts of nearly all their present-day descendants. We divide the whole material into three paragraphs: The first on the Community will show us in which way descent is reckoned, how the local community is held together, the character of political organisation, and the way good order and authority are established; in the course of this we indicate the importance of the relationship between the living and the departed and the impact the ancestors have on the well-being of their descendants; the paragraph concludes with an account of the role of the secret societies in holding the community together and balancing the very strong family ties. In the second paragraph we give a description of the life cycle, the way of man and woman from birth to death. And in the third paragraph on Religion and Rituals we show the important place Witchcraft, Medicine and Divination take in every-day life, lastly, we discuss here the meaning God traditionally has for the Cameroonian. Not until the outlines of Cameroonian culture have been sketched in is it feasible to attempt any analysis of the impact this traditional background has on thought and practice of the Christian Church and to draw any conclusions from such an analysis.

TABLE 1.INITIATION INTO A SECRET SOCIETY

Par. 7. The Community.

1. Groups based upon descent.

The Cameroonian tribes are relatively small in size, and some of them are scattered as tribal sections in a number of different areas. Parts of the Balong tribe, e.g., can be traced in three, and parts of the Barombi tribe in at least five different areas, some of which are as much as eighty miles from each other. The tribe is the largest traditional community in the Cameroons, but it is more of a cultural and linguistic unit rather than a political one and political authority is vested in village councils and associations ("secret societies"), as is the case amongst the Ibo and Yakö¹. There were limited intertribal relations, mainly trading relations, and certain secret societies provided an inter-tribal means of settling disputes.

Each tribe is divided into a number of clans, subclans, and lineages. The tribesmen usually have a sense of patriotism; they are proud to be members of their tribe and they consider it superior to other tribes. Like most Ibibio and Efik the tribes in our area had no tribal head or council of elders.² "The several local communities were held together only by common customs and interests reinforced by common rituals". "Innumerable kinship and economic ties linked together particular individuals and households in the

1) J. Middleton and D. Tait: Tribes without Rulers, p. 3.
Daryll Forde: Ward Organisation among the Yakö.

2) Abel Mukete, Bafé chief in Kumba is an exception to this rule and so was Ntoke the Bakosi chief in Nyasoso.

various local communities.¹ Each of these was, however, virtually autonomous and itself consisted of a federation of territorially discrete, self-governing segments which were regarded as agnatic lineages"². The individual is conscious first and foremost of belonging to his lineage. Sentiments of membership in the tribe are less important and are evoked only in situations involving contact with outsiders. On the one hand political power and prerogatives tend to be concentrated in the hands of the descendants of the senior lineage, of which the chief is the living representative; on the other hand the secret societies create bonds running across lineage lines; by uniting people on a basis independent of descent they tend to link the different lineages

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- 1) Ardener, writing on the local grouping and settlement pattern among the Kpe says: "The village may consist of several small patrilineages generally claiming descent from a common ancestor who founded the village, but members of these patrilineages do not necessarily live together in clearly defined parts of the village. Although village land is divided between the patrilineal kin-groups, individuals often prefer to build their houses away from those of their immediate kin, and no objection is usually made to this. As a result the settlement pattern bears only a general relationship to the descent system. One reason why patrilineal kinsmen tend not to group together in the village is the fear of witchcraft, and in the past the fear of witches in the kin-group often resulted in individual hamlets being established at some distance from a parent village. Although many villages are small, some are large enough to have developed a number of wards or quarters each based on a founding patrilineal kin-group, but these local sub-divisions always contain numbers of persons born in other quarters and even in other villages. Such persons may often be sisters' children, or mothers' sisters' children of natives of the quarter. Where an individual lives in the quarter is, as in villages not divided into quarters, to a large extent a matter of personal choice". Coastal Bantu of the Cameroons: p. 51.

- 2) G.I. Jones: The Political Organisation of Old Calabar: p. 121-122.





2. Banyang Compound, Mamfe

left foreground Cocoa Beans drying



3. Drawings on a House in Mundane Area, Mamfe



4. Bakosi House, Kumba



5. Pontoon Ferry, Mungo River, Kumba

and make them a community. The tribes described are patrilineal¹ with the exception of the Mbonge, Barue and the Balundu tribe which are matrilineal but patrilocal. The following description of part of the Bafe tribe² and its clans and subelans is a typical example of the upbuilding of a Cameroonian, patrilineal tribe³. The next example,⁴ taken in Kumba town, shows how people intermarry between different clans and lineages on the one hand and how different clans and lineages settled in one and the same place on the other hand. It appears to us that these clans have formerly been separated geographically but have now gradually settled in mixed settlements.

2. The Local Community.

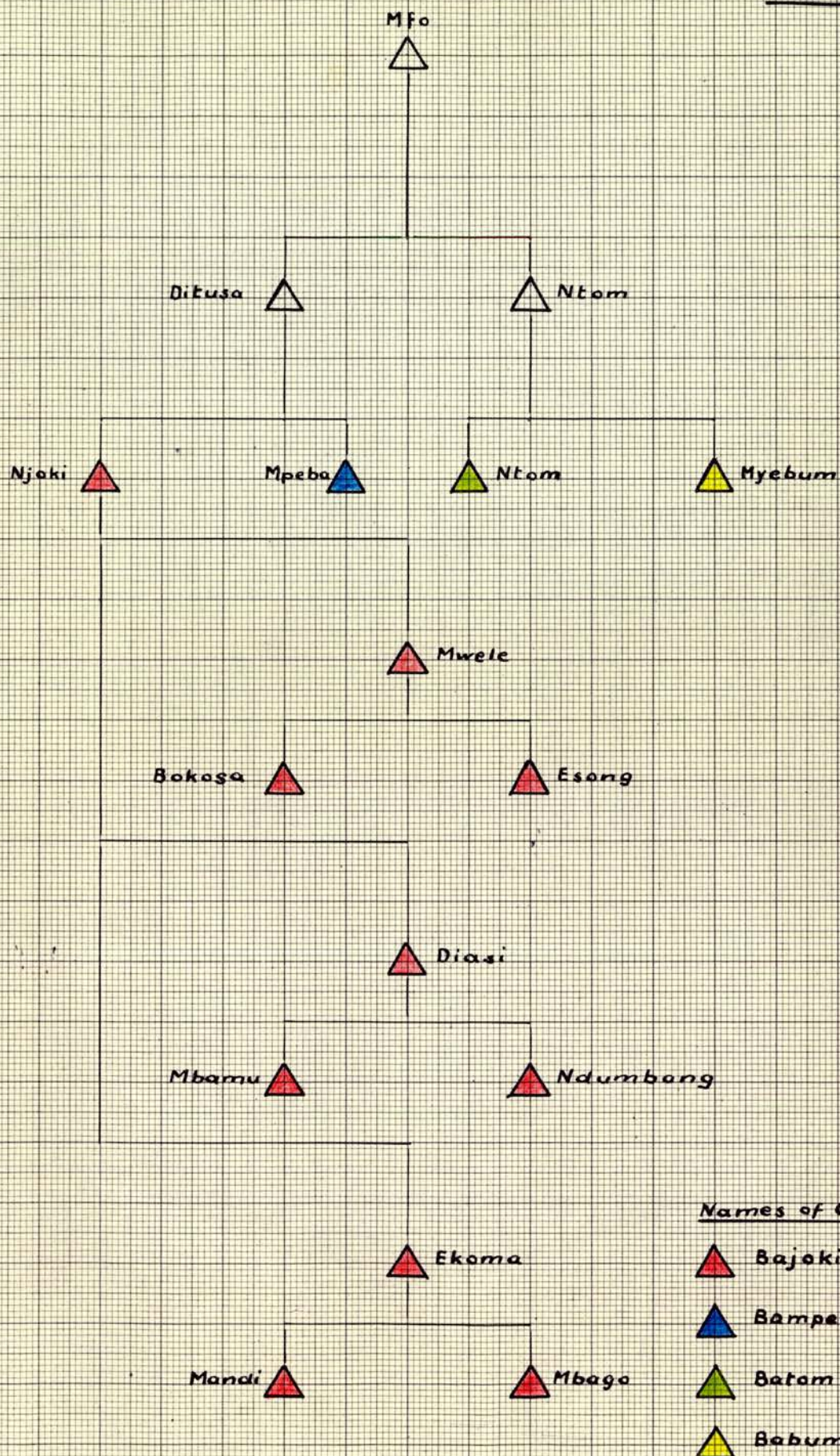
In our area the lineage (mbia) is clearly the main social unit, to which, where descent is reckoned through the male line, all the father's brothers and their children belong. A lineage comprises all the persons of male descent who trace their origin to a known ancestor about six generations back. It is exogamous, and names used for relatives, such as sango = father, nango = mother and muna = child are also used for the father's brothers, their sisters and children.

1) Ardener says, that "among all the groups covered (by him) there is some stress upon both patrilineal and matrilineal descent. Among the Kpe, who have an explicit double descent system, the core of the localised group is the patrilineage, and succession is also patrilineal. On the other hand, while inheritance of land and goods is in their theory patrilineal, it is in practice sometimes from mother's brother to sister's son. The matrilineage is of great ritual importance among the Kpe". He is probably right when he says that "it might perhaps be maintained that there has been a general movement from a system of double descent to a more patrilineal organisation", Coastal Bantu of the Cameroons; p. 52 and 53.

2) Table 2.

3) For a description of a matrilineal tribe see Table 9.

4) Table 3.

BAFO TRIBE AND CLANSTABLE 2.

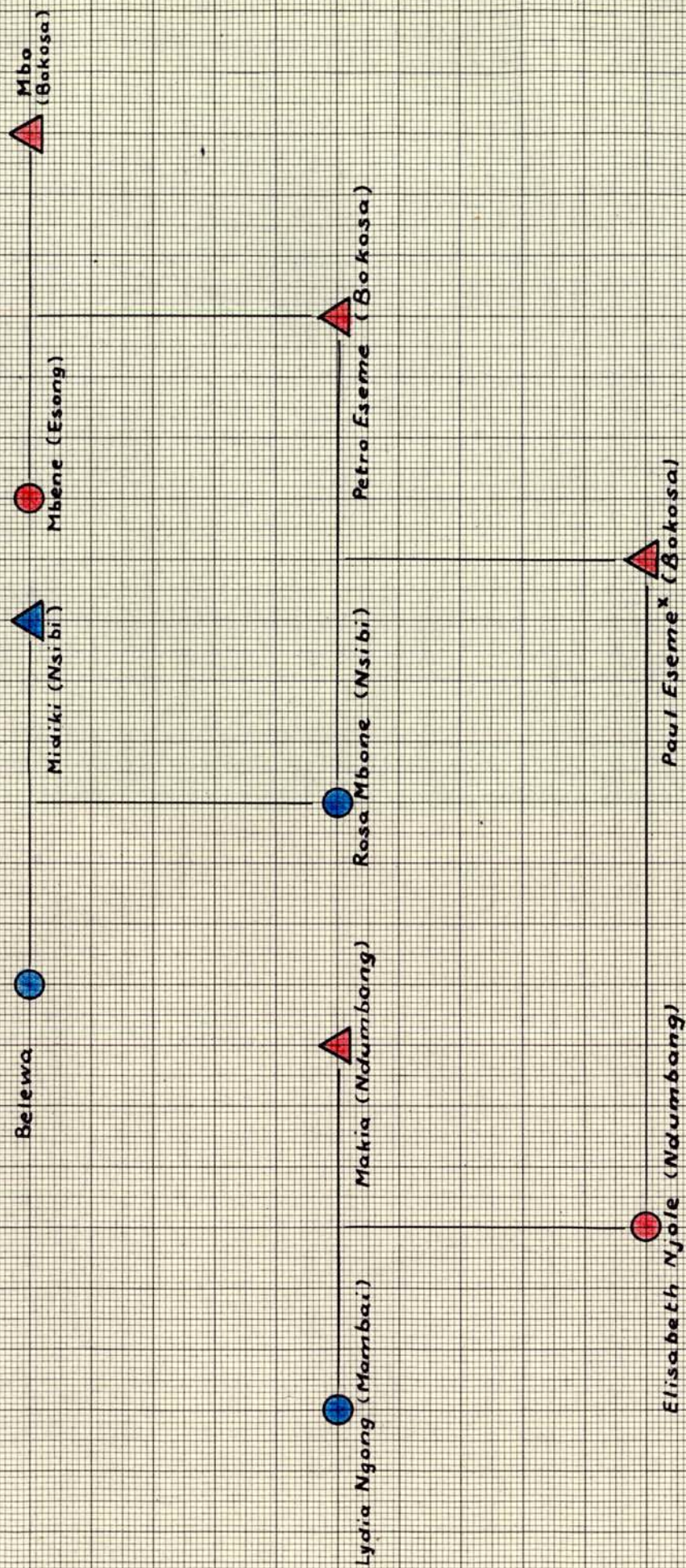


TABLE 3.

EXAMPLE OF INTERMARRIAGE AMONG THE BAFO CLANS (PATRILINEAL)

Names in brackets refer to Lineages and colours to Clans on Table 2.

^x Informant

According to traditional custom the contracting of a marriage is considered to be a matter between two lineages rather than between two individuals. Children resulting from such a bond belong to the man's lineage but usually the woman's lineage also has a say in their upbringing. Through marriage the woman's lineage loses the services of one of its members and a potential child-bearer, so the man's lineage has to replace this loss by paying, what is called bema or marriage payment. A marriage is therefore legal only when this payment has been made. Certain lineages are linked in this way and marriage between them is customary, but parties or lineages do not intermarry if relations between them are not friendly.

The bond which holds the lineage together is very strong. Every member is bound to give every other member any assistance of which he stands in need, whether he likes him or not. The people themselves give expression to this in the phrase:

Po eyabe e si matumba o dibum (literally "The sword of relationship does not strike into the body") This means "Relations do not let their quarrels become too great, since they mutually inherit them."¹ Again they say:

Pue e busedimba o dia la dimose (literally "A mouse has sprung out hear me on my left hand side") This means "I hate

1) Hecklinger: Duala - Sprichwörter; p. 160

the thought of my relations, but I cannot do anything about it; just as I cannot strike with my left hand the mouse which runs past me".¹

As the smallest unit in a lineage we find, particularly in circumstances of polygamy, the mother and her children, who congregate round the fireplace (dio). Because of this the hearth is given a quite special significance, and must be protected against ill-luck and other unfortunate influences. The fireplace consists of three stones (masoso) under which mediums of power are frequently buried, these lend permanency to the family and insure it against misfortune. Through these means the hearth becomes taboo, and various rules have to be observed if good fortune is not to depart.

The husband is forbidden to pull up the hearthstones; otherwise he would dislocate his marriage with the woman who is the owner of it. Should he tear out the stones his marriage relationship is dissolved; he may do it as a sign to his wife that she is to go, or as an answer to his wife's desertion.

Masoso ma nango, meaning "mother's hearthstone" is used to indicate the children of the same mother.

Dio la bato, meaning "peoples hearth" is used for the family belonging to one hearth, and their dwelling.

In the lowlands the settlements are built close together. The villages consist of various quarters, each of which contains

1) Ibid: p. 160.



6. Mother with Child, Mundane, Mamfe



7. Girl playing native Xylophone in Bechati, Mamfe

several families. The quarters are linked by narrow bush paths from which tracks lead off to the individual farms. One single village may embrace as many as five or more of these quarters. In the highlands, particularly in the upper part of the Mamfe Divison, each family has settled in a compound of its own. The compounds lie scattered over the hillsides, miles away from each other. Each compound is surrounded by a stout fence (koto) as a protection against danger from without, and to keep the sheep, etc., together during the night. The quarters and villages in the lowlands used also to be fenced, but this is no longer everywhere the case. In many places a strip of ground-nut shells is spread diagonally across the path before the entrance to the village or to a farm. This "fence", which is also called koto, keeps baleful influences away from the premises: and at harvest time some grain and nuts are added, so that the bearers of evil powers may get their share and depart.

The houses like the settlements, are protected by "medicine" against the envy of others.

Usually at some distance from the village there is a place (dibala) where sacrifices to the ancestors are made, serious offences discussed, and family quarrels cleared up.

Every lineage has its head (mutudu) who represents them before the Chief, or in the Council. He is not only their representative, however, but also their "priest". As such he makes the sacrifices to the ancestors on the dibala.

Family sacrifices are made on the grave of the ancestor, or at the rubbish-heap behind the house.

The building of houses, battues, and, in former days, military expeditions are all common activities, and as such they were and are carried out by all the members of a quarter or village.

i. The Unity of the Living and the Dead.

When we are talking of lineage, we must not forget that included therein are both the living and the deceased members; for face to face with the "Earthly Village" (mundi ma wase) there is a "Village of the Dead" (mundi ma kwedi) or "Village of the Spirits of the Ancestors" (mundi ma bedimo). They imagine the spirit village as a replica of their own village on earth, but without the impulse of life driving the inhabitants on.

The ancestors take part in the life of their people on earth, and influence it actively by means of fortune and misfortune.

The living influence the will of the ancestors by sacrificing to them in order to make them change their minds in cases of ill-luck, or to bribe them in advance. The common aim of all lineage activities is to maintain harmony among the living and with the dead.

ii. Right of Succession and Inheritance.

In polygamous conditions it is usually the eldest son of the chief wife (nango a mboa), who succeeds his father, otherwise the eldest son. He enters upon all the rights and duties of the deceased father. Should the children still be small at the time of their father's death, the father's eldest brother steps in as administrator of the inheritance. The heir procures wives and homes for his brothers. Daughters and wives inherit nothing. They are assets in the bulk of the inheritance.

iii. Property.

The lineage possesses and inherits the land. Since population density is low, sufficient land is available for all, so that serious disputes over it are comparatively rare. Respect for the property of one's fellowmen was formerly greater than it is today; so were the punishments for theft. Slaves were the property of the family, and, like other property, were heritable.

Mubene lambo a titi mutu (literally "The possessor of a thing is not a boy") means "However young the possessor of a thing may be, no one older may dispose of his belongings").¹

iv. Hospitality.

Mwen a dikaki a si makusa njai "A guest who has been announced must never suffer hunger").²

The people are hospitable - especially to their kinsmen. An old custom lays down that a guest should bring a little salt with him as a present for the host. To such length can hospitality go, that a man may relinquish one of his wives to his guest during the period of his visit.

3. Political Authority.

As the tribe is more of a cultural and linguistic unit, political authority is not centralised, as in other regions, in the person of a tribal chief or council but is vested in village councils and secret societies, the latter tying the various wards and villages together. The maintenance of order within a town, as M.J. Ruel points out, "is a function of the corporate bodies representing it, themselves spoken of as the town"³. These corporate bodies are the men and women

1) Hecklinger: p. 48.

2) Hecklinger: p. 222.

3) The Banyang of the Southern Cameroons: p. 6.

organised in their respective societies (formerly also the slaves), the age-groups and the various lineages. These different elements each have their representation in the political system.

At the head of the homestead stands the head of the family (sango a mboa), at the head of the lineage the elder (mutudu) while the villagehead is usually called chief (mwanedi), though according to traditional custom he might more accurately be referred to as a spokesman. The office of chief is in most cases a hereditary one, and devolves on one of the sons of the previous chief. The succession is not, however, entirely determined by the old chief. Normally the batudu and other powerful members of the lineage help him to decide.

The batudu as councillors, together with the village chief, form the Town Council. (The village chiefs together under a Paramount Chief, form a Council of a larger area. New!)

The interests of the young men, in so far as they are concerned with the chief, are specially watched over by the representatives of their age set (mwemba). In the same way the women are able to make their voices heard through the "nango a mudi", or Village Mother.

As a further element in the organisation of the tribe we must add the secret societies. These cut across the genealogical lines, and bind the divergent strains together. It is therefore only in association with them that the chief has any authority. Formerly no chief could hold his position if he were opposed to the secret societies. A chief would therefore seek to create either a new

secret society, which would surpass the others, or a kind of super association which would cover all the communities' societies. The secret societies thus not only supported the power of the chief, but were at the same time his co-partners in it. They saw that decrees were properly carried out, and called defaulters to account.

Thus they held both "ruler" and people in their power.¹

i. The Law.

As governmental authority was formerly shared by the Village Councils and Secret Societies which were almost identical, so the two powers naturally also shared the jurisdiction in their areas.

The "law courts" lay under an obligation to be impartial and every case had to be properly investigated.

Elimbi e si matopo mudu mo - literally "The talking drum does not only speak on one side" (one must beat both sides in order to make oneself intelligible) means "Until one has examined both parties,

- 1) G.I. Jones' description of the function of the Egbo (Ekpe) society in the traditional community, a society which exists also in our area gives us a good insight in the way it helped to maintain good order and authority: "The Egbo Society formerly "ruled the village". That is to say, the village elders were all senior members of the society and, until recently, enforced their authority and punished and disciplined the people in the name of the society, or rather, of the supernatural being to whom the society ministered. They could use their authority to support their legislative or judicial decisions, either by invoking the ban or taboo of Egbo upon the offender himself and upon his property, or by sending the agents of the society sometimes in their own person, sometimes disguised as Egbo spirits, to levy a fine or, in the pre-colonial period, to kill him. These were its most obvious political functions, but even its more recreational activities had their political use. The political festivals and parades, while satisfying the needs of the younger members for pageantry and display, also served to unite and discipline them. The weekly meetings of the society, which provided for the more nature recreations of drinking and discussion, also brought together in friendly, non-controversial atmosphere all the men of importance in the community and constituted a form for the peaceful discussion of village affairs". The Political Organisation of Old Calabar: p. 137.

one can deliver no judgment on a matter."¹

Equally, every accused person has the right to defend himself, however hopeless his case may appear.

To na mapimbabe nde o madiba, ese le mba na ka - literally

"Even though I am at once thrown into the water, let me at least state my case" (formerly those charged with witchcraft were thrown into the water), means "Even if a man's case is hopeless, and he has indeed merited death, he will not bear the judgment patiently until he has defended himself to the best of his ability."²

In addition to the usual legal assemblies, various methods are still in use for extracting the "truth." Should anyone be accused of witchcraft, he had to undergo the Ordeal (no kwa - to drink a poisonous distillation). The bark of the kwa³ was soaked in a pot of water, and washed in lye. Globules of bark were formed, which the accused had to swallow; then he drank as much as possible of the poisoned brew. If he was able to vomit up again the globules and brew, whilst going up and down the arena singing, he was freed, and his good name restored. If, however, he began to stagger, without being sick, Kwa had revealed his guilt, and he was struck dead or hanged, or in some areas as the saying above says he was drowned. In the district along the Nigerian frontier makasambingo⁴

1) Hecklinger: Duala Sprichwörter, p. 45.

2) *ibid*: p. 37.

3) Erythrophleum guineense - Sassafras or Sassafras.

4) Fruit of the Physostigma venenosum.

was used instead of kwa.

In former days many tribes already followed the practice, now universal since the banning of these ordeals, of giving a hen kwa to drink instead of giving it to the suspect. The results are watched, and the sentence, which consists in the payment of a fine or reparation, is passed thereafter.

If anyone was suspected of causing a man's death, he had to drink the "dirt of the corpse."¹ If he was guilty he was lost, but this disgusting drink did the innocent no harm.

An old custom, which today has almost disappeared, was the topo besa.² A lineage would gather together in order to remove through public discussion, culpability, for some evil or illness, or to turn away threatened disaster, and, by so doing, restore normality once more. This would also be done before any difficult ventures, such as war, big game hunting, etc., in order to do away with possible hindrance. The compromised one is charged with his fault and an attempt is made to move him to make reparation. If he should confess his guilt, he must specify his reasons, and the group insists that the reasons be removed. Thereupon, as a sign of purification, water is sprinkled over his hands and feet, and thus normality is restored.

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- 1) No mbindo a mbimba = to drink the dirt of the corpse (its saliva and other waste matter).
- 2) to po = to speak; besa is from sa = to blame.

ii. Covenants.

Covenants used to be concluded between individuals, families, and even whole lineages and tribes. Indeed, they are still so concluded today. An oath on an emblem of power and a symbolic action, or even the latter only, is at the bottom of the alliance. In the past a nostrum was always drunk on those occasions, and this is still frequently done. Should the oath itself not be uttered, the action counts as the oath, since the word is less binding than the symbol.

The action which forms the basis of the covenant usually consists in the drinking of a potion.¹ The aim is to bind oneself so closely to a source of power or to a man that to break one's faith must inevitably lead to death. In regard to blood-brotherhood, those concerned mix drops of their own blood with palm wine and drink it. On occasions when peace was about to be concluded, and tribes were arranging a great covenant-drinking ceremony in that connection, a man had to be burned alive. His ashes became the source which punished those who transgressed against the alliance. The sacrifice was usually a slave. He was bound to a stake and laid on a great fire; or else he was bound to a tree, and wood was piled round him and kindled. The ashes were divided out into small packets and distributed among the villagers present. They were kept in the huts of the secret societies.

1) no Male = to drink a potion; or no maya = to drink blood.

When covenants are being concluded between two groups of people, or when they are making peace after a war or a feud, a tree (bwele) is often planted as a sign of peace. This is customarily done at the frontier, but sometimes also in the villages concerned.

4. The Ancestors.

We have already seen that the natives imagine the hereafter (mundi ma kwedi or mundi ma bedimo) to be a replica of life on earth. The dead live in their own town, and occupy there the self-same positions which they adorned in life in their own village. Because of this all the actions at the funeral ceremony, which are going to be described, are carried out in order to make the departed appear as great a man as possible on his arrival in the town of the dead. Often men from the same village, unrelated, however, to the deceased, place objects in his grave for him to deliver to their own dead when he arrives on the other side, with a view to keeping them favourably disposed.

We further saw that the existence of the living and that of the dead are inextricably interwoven with each other, and that the fortune and well-being of the former is largely dependent on the goodwill of the latter. It is therefore of the greatest importance to the living not to neglect their dead, but to sacrifice to them in order to retain that goodwill.

For this reason sacrifices are made to the ancestors to put them in a good mood for some undertaking, or to make them change their minds in cases of ill-luck.¹ If only one family makes a

1) teke bedimo = stinging the spirits.

sacrifice, they usually do it on the rubbish heap behind the house; but if a whole lineage gathers together for a feasting of the ancestors,¹ it takes place in most cases on the "dibala" - a place hidden in the bush outside the village. The "feasting of the ancestors" is preceded by the "calling of the ancestors",² also the expression of the requirements of the moment, or expression of thanks, for instance at the birth of a child. The foodstuffs brought for the occasion, of which the greater part is consumed by the celebrants themselves, is placed on the dibala.

All native products and different kinds of meat are suitable for use as sacrifice, as well as the palm wine, snuff and salt.

"Because in the realm of magic the principle "pars pro toto" prevails, the sacrificial gift is often only small - a feather, for instance, may stand for the whole fowl. The spirits only consume the spiritual part of the gift. It counts as a particularly good sign if the animals (especially those which are considered as bound up with the ancestors, such as the ngokolo (millipede), also called wub' a bedimo (ancestors' fowl) eat up the food which has been deposited"³

1) dese bedimo = feasting of the ancestors: from da = to eat.

2) bele la bedimo = calling of the spirits of the ancestors.

3) Ittmann: Volkskundliche und Religiöse Begriffe, p. 9.

In many districts the people lay the first fruits of the new harvest on the place of sacrifice, or on the ancestors' graves.

Apart from the above there are also expiation discussions before the ancestors, by means of which serious occurrences affecting the family's well-being are dealt with. For example, if a woman does not become pregnant at the appropriate time, the reason is sought in her bad relations with her forbears. The husband's family notifies the wife's relations, and requests them to set the matter right through an expiation discussion,¹ after the husband has reconciled the family by all sorts of gifts. The wife's family must now persuade the ancestors to remove her barrenness.

Although the single ancestor holds great power over the immediately succeeding generation, his great-grandchildren have mostly forgotten him, and his personality merges into the general concept of the spirits of the ancestors.

5. The Secret Societies.

Outwardly the secret societies do not stand out today as so all powerful as they used to be. They still play an extraordinary important role, however, in the private lives of individuals and families, as well as in public life. The following incident illustrates this clearly:- One day we were having a discussion with a town council, about the bad condition of the school buildings in their village. We proposed to them that they should stop building bush school-houses, and should

1) musoso. (An example of this is given in par. 12.4.)

should erect permanent buildings which, in the long run, would be cheaper and better. We talked over the matter in all its details, and eventually arrived at the question of finance. We suggested that the money should be raised in the normal way, i.e. by taxation. The chief, however, asserted that too little money would be collected in this way, and that a very long time would elapse before everyone had paid up. He therefore moved that the decision should be made through the secret society. To our question as to how this would be done, he answered shortly: "We will have a meeting in the evening in the society's building, and will discuss the affair again. If we are unanimous about it, we will make "medicine" and will resolve that every member of the community must pay the society a certain sum. Thereupon, we will make the resolution known to everyone. To our further question as to whether they would all pay, he replied: "Certainly they will all pay! Even those from a distance, who are working in the plantations or in city businesses. You see, they are all afraid that the "medicine" will kill them."

In the secret societies men try by means of transformation ceremonies to enter into the possession of special skills, partly to hold together and rule over their lineages which are tending to disintegrate, and partly to make themselves strong vis a vis those outside the society. In particular, however, they want to become lords over the unseen world, and to conquer

conquer magic powers. to use them for their own benefit. Every secret society has its "demon" which is represented by a mask.¹ These masks portray either animals or deathsheds and appear to be remotely connected with totemism and the cult of the dead. The ceremonial objects of the society must not be seen or touched by members of the opposite sex.

The secret societies occupy themselves with every department of the life of the community. In the hands of the secret society lies the administration of the area. Another secret society carries out the executive power and the police work.² Other societies carry out the funeral rites and watch over amusements and games.

In general the isango³ stands out as an organisation for peace. Musango⁴ is the condition established by the isango, peace after the setting aside of the hindrances which a quarrel, legal case or a feud had caused. Koma musango (to establish peace) actually means to place the ceremonial objects of the isango between the contestants, whereupon hostilities are discontinued, and the isango institutes peace negotiations.

1) mulopo

2) Inevitably this society has to be suppressed by the Government.

3) isango (sing.) = secret society; losango (plur:) = secret societies.

4) musango = peace. (See also the word sanga in par.14.)

Apart from these more public activities, the societies make provision for their members. The secret society is a kind of "savings bank" into which members pay a part of their assets, and which they can turn to advantage in many different ways. The entrance fee to be paid is the savings deposit, consisting of poultry, pigs, goats, etc., cattle, goods or cash. The members profit from it in that they have a share in the society's revenues, including entrance fees, compensation money, fines, and other common acquisitions.

From what has been said it will readily be seen that the man who is not a member of a secret society stands completely outside the important spheres of community life.

The father takes great care, therefore, to buy his son admission into the secret society whilst he is still a child; and the adult enters, if possible, several societies, in order to have his say, and be a partner in every activity. There are, however, societies whose high entrance fee is only attainable by the rich. Other societies were*only accessible to freemen. Almost the whole population was included in the lower grades of other societies. There were also secret societies for women, and others for slaves.

Most secret societies have several distinct circles of initiation into their secrets. Naturally the power and authority of the members increase with each new circle they enter. Before entry into a new ring a further sum must in every case be paid.¹ Here is

1) see Table 1.

an example of the entrance fees of a secret society of the Isangeli: "A young man first joining was allowed to become a member of the junior grade OKPO on payment of £15 - (actually paid in rum and livestock). The next grade was NGANDA and a further fee of £25 was required for promotion to this grade. Finally £30 was payable for promotion to EKPE itself. Only a few rich heads of families could afford it."¹ Ardener² gives one example from among the Kpe (Bakwiri in Victoria Division) "where the secret societies do not appear to have gained a position as law-enforcing bodies as in some Cameroons tribes." This society called "Male" has four stages or classes of membership, in ascending order: Love, Venjuka, Tamba, and Vekpa. To enter Love costs only six pence, to enter Venjuka costs six shillings, Tamba costs 25 shillings and Vekpa 30 shillings.

6. Summary.

The tribe is the largest traditional community, but it is more of a cultural and linguistic unit as political authority is not centralised in the person of a tribal chief or council. But the individual is conscious first and foremost of belonging to his lineage and it is round the lineage, its well-being and continuity, that everything else is centred. The lineage includes its living and deceased members and there is a continual inter-relationship between the two. The ancestors take part in the life of their people

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- 1) F.A. Goodliffe: Intelligence Report on the Jsangeli Community.
 - 2) Costal Bantu of the Cameroons, p. 68.

on earth and influence it actively by bringing fortune and misfortune, while the living influence the will of their ancestors by sacrificing to them in order to avert ill-luck. From these connections an ancestor-cult has developed, in which the lineage members think above all of their own ancestors. The living family forms, with those of its dead members whose names are still remembered, a unity with mutual rights and duties. We understand now what we mentioned before, that life is understood as a cycle, as the flow of nature; that it is continual return, a swinging between the poles of life and death which are opposites only in a relative sense.

Political authority is not centralised in the person of the chief. Instead, government and good order is a function of the corporate bodies representing the village, i.e. men and women, young and old, lineages and age-groups. All these groups have a natural tendency to disintegrate or secede in case of disagreement as they do not come under the final control of any centralised power which might hold them together, as happens with the office of chief or king in other tribes. The obligations established by the secret societies cut across these genealogical lines they create ties between people of similar age and ensure that community life is not disrupted by inter-lineage disputes.

From the above we understand that the life of the community is under an order embracing all the different departments of life and that the good order, peace and harmony which are so important for its continuity, are maintained by its social and religious practices. We shall show in the next paragraph how the same criteria

also apply to the life of the individual in the community.

Par. 8. The Social Cycle.

1. Birth.

When a child is born there is great rejoicing throughout the whole family. If the new-born baby is a boy, the jubilation is somewhat greater than if it is a girl. Through this son and heir the continuity of the family is assured, and that is an extraordinarily important consideration to the Cameroonian.

If the baby is a girl, the joy is also great, though not so openly displayed as at the birth of a boy. Every little girl born into the family is a new source of wealth, since the marriage payment comes to them when the girl gets married!

The birth of twins is also greeted with gladness, although it brings with it additional taboos. There is less enthusiasm when an albino is born. The light shade of the skin is also the colour of ghosts, and in many places it is believed that albinos come direct from heaven.¹ But in spite of this they are not expelled from the community.

It is not surprising that in this, the most intimate sphere of man's life, a whole series of attempts should have been made to explain matters by means of myths. Like many other peoples they connect the moon (modi) with it all. If a woman menstruates they say:

1) We do not imply that something coming from heaven is understood or felt as being something fearful. But as we shall see later in this chapter things and happenings that do not fit into the ordinary pattern of life are quite often attributed to heaven or to God.

muto a mene modi - the woman is looking at or visiting the moon.

If a woman is expecting a baby, the Bakosi say that she has been to the forge in the sky. The moon forges babies, and, indeed, hammers the menstrual flow in such a way that it issues no more, and the foetus grows out of it. Should menstruation occur, the moon has introduced unhammered, unformed blood into the woman's body. The moon is thus in this connection the former and creator.¹ In the baying of the Flying Fox they hear the "hammering" of the smith in the spiritual world.

The birth itself was protected by taboos to which the pregnant woman had to conform, and all possible magic means were taken to ensure its successful outcome.

The placenta (ngobi) or the child's navel (mutodi) is in many cases buried in the compound as a sign that the child belongs to this particular family.

After the birth, mostly on the ninth day, all sorts of customs are carried out in order to dispose of the weakness connected with the birth, and to inaugurate the taboo period of two to three years during which the woman is to remain untouched.

If a young mother dies, a relation is sought who will suckle the child. Another young woman is seldom found, however, who is ready to do so, since it would mean that she would have to abstain from sexual intercourse, and thus postpone her own next child. Also

1) ebonde comes from bonda - to form, create, forge, especially in the sense of "forging people" in the mother's body.

there is a superstition that the dead mother will avenge herself on her deputy because she has taken her child. They therefore try to awake the dried up milk of an older woman by sympathetic magic.¹ There are also customs for the preparation of the breasts (pongo mabe) before the baby is put to them for the first time.

In many places, women in childbed smear their bodies with ground camwood to protect themselves against sinister influences.

2. Infancy, Childhood and Puberty.

Soon after its birth the baby gets its name,² which is often taken from that of someone whom the parents want to set before their child as an example.

Circumcision takes place without any ceremony at the age of 6 - 10, and is carried out by a man. After circumcision the boys live for some days together in a hut, which must on no account be entered by women, in order to prevent any sexual excitement which might impede recovery. In days gone by circumcision probably formed part of the initiation rites.

Children are weaned at the age of two or three years. Up till

1) The Basa give such a woman three coconuts per day to drain, in order that the milk may come. The Bakweri put the fresh bark of the Bokuka (Alstonia congensis) in water, by which means the sap is coloured whitish. The woman drinks this brew, which sets up an irritation and is vomited up again. She then sits down by the fire like a woman in childbed, and waits till the milk appears next day.

J. Ittmann: Volkskundliche und Religiöse Begriffe. p. 10

2) Dina la dibum - name of the belly; dina la yabe - birth name.

then the mother almost always carried them around on her back. Until they are four or five years old they play their games round the parent's house. When they reach the age of five, girls begin to help their mother with the housework and are gradually initiated into their duties. Boys are introduced to their adult responsibilities by their father, whom they have to obey.

O wu te mutu, o da mbodi - literally "When you are grown up you may eat a goat," means "When one is young one is held down."¹

Girls usually marry at the age of fifteen or sixteen.

3. Initiation.

The secret societies² have still a very strong influence on the life of the community in most areas, but many of their outward forms have lapsed. Thus it is that the initiation rites are nowadays carried out only in a few districts, and there only for quite short periods of time.

Formerly boys of ten to fifteen used to be summoned to an initiation course run by the secret society. In a certain hut in the forest these candidates (mukuku) for membership were introduced to the secrets of the society by an old member. This course lasted one to two years - a time full of taboos for the boys. Often they smeared their bodies with white earth, the colour of spirits, and learned a secret language. During their initiation they were supposed to be possessed by demons. These youths were changed into new men in their initiation.

1) Hecklinger: Duala Sprichwörter, p. 151.

2) The Secret Society - sing. isango, plur. losango.

They had got to know the isango (ba bi isango), and distinguished themselves clearly from those who did not know it (ba si bi isango). As a sign of their new existence they were all assigned new names. At the end of the course there was a big celebration at which the mikuku were changed back into men again.

All the youths who had attended the same course formed an ageset (mwemba). Even today they are vowed to mutual assistance and have their own representative in their dealings with the chief. They recognise each other by certain passwords.¹

Similar courses for girls also existed in the past.

4. Manhood and Womanhood.

Men used to marry at about twenty years of age. It was the father's business to pay the bridewealth for his son's first wife. Today they marry somewhat later as a rule, since they must first earn the money for the very high sums they now must collect, usually themselves, for their brides. Frequently when a young man marries his first wife they both live in his father's house to begin with. Some time later he will build his own house. In most tribes every wife lives in a hut of her own,

1) Those born in 1881-3 formed the "Gorilla Age-group" - ngil'a mwemba. Their password is: e dom te = What happens when he is roaring? The answer is: eyidi na sao! = The forest becomes quite still! Those born in 1866 - 8 formed the "European age-group" - mukal'a mwemba, whose password is: nj'e pemse bakala? = What makes the white man superior the answer being: ngadi = rifles.

Ittmann: Volkskundliche und Religiöse Begriffe; p. 46.

or in the kitchen, which commonly stands some distance off behind the husband's house.

A man's importance in the village community grows with every step upwards which he takes in life. The chief steps are as follows:-

1. Initiation to the secret society.
2. Marriage.
3. The first child, and every subsequent one.
4. (If he is a polygamist) Each new wife whom he marries.
5. (Formerly) The increasing number of slaves he possessed.

If he has several wives, the first is normally the chief wife (nango a mboa - wife of the house). She rules over the other wives, and in times past also over the slaves.

As in many other parts of Africa we have in the Cameroons a sharp distinction between what is considered men's work, and what is considered women's.

Men's Work.

Cutting bush and clearing farm land.

Tapping palm trees for palm wine.

Weaving, sewing and plaiting²

Women's Work.

Planting and harvesting the crops.¹

Pottery-making.

Housework and cooking

1) An exception occurs in the case of rice cocoa and coffee, which, however, are recently introduced crops.

2) Nowadays many women sew likewise.

Men's Work.

Hunting, and supplying meat.
 Making of the wooden Structure
 and roofs for houses.
 Protection of the family as
 warrior (formerly), or by
 means of magic.

Women's Work.

Filling up (crevices in) the
 walls of the house with clay.
 Restoration of contact with
 the spirits of the dead (as
 medium).
 Preparing of medicines against
 all sorts of illnesses.

In the past, women were helped, particularly in their
 agricultural work, by slaves.

Since a woman's life contains more transition periods than
 that of a man (menstruation, birth, weaning, widowhood, etc.) she
 also has many more taboos to observe.

5. Marriage.

Just as in the case of work, an exact division exists
 between man's work and woman's, so the whole of life may be
 looked upon as a cycle which runs according to laws valid for
 all. Marriage is a stage in this cycle which must be reached
 sooner or later by hook or by crook. The social and economic
 situation (see the division of labour between the sexes) was such
 that it was unthinkable for a woman to remain unmarried for long.
 An unmarried woman of eighteen is therefore even today considered
 to be a prostitute whatever her profession may be.

We shall consider here only marriages which are contracted
 under "Native Law and Custom." Those contracted according to
 "English Law" are so few¹ that they hardly influence this

1) According to information from the District Office in Victoria
 the annual number up till now in the Victoria Division hardly
 reaches ten.

exposition of marriage.

In many cases agreement about giving daughter in marriage is reached long before her maturity - in certain districts even before her birth, or shortly thereafter.

Bridewealth varies between £20 and £180, according to the father's position, and the extent of the daughter's training.

Diba la wonja a si mabo - literally "Payment for the marriage of a free daughter is never at an end," means "Even when a man has paid the full price for his wife, he is not automatically released thereby from his obligations to her family. Whenever her relations are in need, her husband must help them out."¹

M'bango ma njou mu buki njou malongo - literally "The elephant's tusk is more valuable than the elephant," means "If a chief takes a wife he pays a very small sum for her; if he gives the daughter of this wife in marriage, however, the bridegroom must pay a very high bridewealth."

Divorce is not difficult: if the wife is the guilty party, her family must repay the bridewealth in whole or in part.

Besides the normal form of marriage (diba)² according to "Native Law and Custom," there are various other relationships which we might mention here.

1) Hecklinger: Duala Sprichwörter, p. 127.

2) diba = marriage, from ba = to marry.

Jomba is a love-affair carried on although the two lovers are not living together.

Disom is a relationship whereby the possessor of a wife allows her, either expressly, or through his silence in the matter, to live with another man, without any arrangement between the two families, and thus also without any payment. Through disom a man may bind another man to him either temporarily or for life. The wife and children still belong to the legal husband. At the most, when the bridegroom pays the bride-price on the marriage of a daughter, the father may receive a small indemnity for bringing her up. The arrangement can be terminated at any time by the legal husband, the other man coming out of the business with no advantage whatsoever. Thus the polygamist increases his household.

The relinquishing of a wife to a guest during the period of his visit is also called disom.

Sombo is the opposite of a legally conducted marriage - a marriage by abduction. If this does not bring serious conflict in its train - and most family and tribal wars were motivated by this - negotiations must immediately be started with the woman's family in order to base the marriage on a contract.

Esila is a less legal form of marriage, half-way between disom and diba. This marriage is founded on a verbal agreement between the owner of the woman, who is usually a widow, and the man, whereby the latter pays a small sum, and donates a pig, or other meat, for a feast to the family. If the women who take part in esila

are mostly widows, the men are usually either immigrants who do not want to settle down permanently, or poor people who cannot afford to pay much. While the children belong to the wife's family, she herself cannot be recalled as long as the man fulfils his obligations. Should he return to his homeland, however, the wife automatically reverts to her former owner.

6. Old Age.

The older a man or woman gets, the more he or she is held in honour by the younger people.

It is on the old people that the decision rests at secret society meetings, and it is also they who, as the heads of families, make the sacrifices to the ancestors.

A man's experience, wisdom and cunning increase with age, and the young have therefore got to submit to the decrees of the old.

"One cannot count the teeth of an old man" means "One knows one cannot make an impression on him, since he cleverly conceals his intentions."¹

"Doi la mutud'a moto masonga m'ekusungah" - literally "The voice of an old man is as sharp as the teeth of the warrior ant" means "When an old man has spoken he will not eat his words."²

Mutud'a tobo nu literally "That is the age of the pea," means "Old age has special privileges as compared with youth." A similar saying is: Biso di be mute ma no - literally "We are

1) Ittmann: Sprichwörter der Nyang, p. 125

2) Hecklinger: Duala Sprichwörter, p. 152

the length of the hair" means "although peas are all alike and the crinkly hair of old and young is the same length, the young need not think that they have the same rights as the old!"¹

If an old man becomes senile, he is not expelled for that reason, but finishes his days in the bosom of his family.

Old women are equally esteemed. They know all the customs connected with birth and other dangerous periods in the life of man, and also know many remedies against sickness. They too are honoured and end their lives in the family circle.

7. Death.

O doli mulema, o wo, o si doli mulema, o wo nde, means "Whether you were good or bad, you must die."²

The deaths of little children and old people are considered as normal deaths. The people believe that the living soul (mudi) is not yet present in the former case, or is already exhausted, in the latter, as a result of which the body

1) *ibid*: p. 151.

2) *ibid*: p. 235.

simply ceases to be. All other deaths, whether male or female, they believe to be due either to evil powers, to the deceased's own fault, or to strange influences.

In most districts they cut open the abdomen of a dead body in order to discover the cause of death from the colour and position of the entrails.

At death, the living soul (mudi) leaves the body (nolo) in so far as it has not already been dispersed. (They know nothing of the further whereabouts of the mudi). At the same time the shadow soul passes from the cadaver, first of all as a soul filled with vitality (mudimo). Thereafter it departs to the land of shadows as a soul devoid of vitality (edimo).

If a man's death does not take place under normal conditions, that is to say by night in his hut, danger is scented for the survivors, and safety measures are taken. "Bloody death," i.e. in battle, during the hunt, by wild beasts, accidents, falling trees, drowning, death with open wounds (e.g. tropical ulcers or leprosy), with a swollen body, or by suicide, demands protection of the living against the evil powers by whom the deceased was slain, and who can still operate through his body or his blood. Such corpses are often buried in a special way, without ornaments or gifts. Formerly they were thrown into the bush and left to the beasts.

In many areas members of a secret society when dying are carried into the society's hut to breathe their last.

No-one wants to die away from home. If a man from the interior becomes seriously ill on a coastal plantation, his friends do their best to get him home as quickly as possible. Should a man be lying at death's door in hospital, suddenly the men of his family will appear and carry him off home, since they are afraid he might die away from them.

Mbimba ma inon mu si maboŷe o moñ a ebongo - literally "The bird's body does not rot on the tree trunk" means "No-one wants to be buried in a far country".¹

Etonde a ñamse kwed'ao - literally "Etonde (name of a man) has spoilt his death" means "He died in a distant land, where his funeral rites did not take place, and his village cronies lost their funeral baked meats".²

As soon as anyone dies the lamentation for the dead begins. If the deceased was a man of note, the people come even from distant villages to lament, and a fearful howling fills the air all over that part of the village. The widows of a man who has just died run round the hamlet lamenting, and proclaiming to all who will listen what a good man their husband has been.

O en te muna ikwale na besao o ñolo, ke mbela e putedi ñango - "If you come upon the young partridge all covered with feathers, the eagle has swooped on its mother" means "If you meet a woman with untidy hair, you know her husband has died".³

1) Hecklinger: Duala Sprichwörter, p. 234.

2) *ibid*: p. 234.

3) *ibid*: p. 237.

On a death taking place the members of the family, especially the widows, enter a danger period. Signs of mourning are put on, the widows in certain parts of the country smear their bodies with ashes, and all those connected with the bereaved family cut off their hair. The donning of the mourning tokens (malebo), like their removal, takes place at a cult ceremony, where after bathing there is a dance. The water removes the signs of uncleanness. The duration of the mourning period is fixed by the head of the family, and is usually from three to nine months.

The mourning customs (sasa kwedi) are, with slight variations, performed as follows: the hair of the survivors is cut, the mourning token put on, and the house cleaned. The personal effects of the deceased are in part rendered unusable, and, together with food, are laid out on a stand (makita) in front of the house. Furthermore, salt and snuff are sprinkled on the path, and a great fire lit before the huts. The spiritual essence of these articles is supposed to follow the dead man into the realm of the dead. His fields are laid waste, too, the shrubs and plants being torn up, hacked to bits, and strewn on the fields. In making them unusable, they believe they are laying out his plot for the departed in the next world. As a consequence widows also destroy part of their fields for the sake of their dead husband. In many cases there follows a communal feast at the grave, the dead man also receiving his share.

As long as a man is living, every possible step is taken as a general rule to preserve him in life. Should he die, however, his compatriots take the greatest pains to prevent a possible return

from the grave.

The grave (songo) was in bygone days a round or oval hole in the ground, about five feet deep. At the foot of this there was a depression in which the body, wrapped in palm-leaf matting was laid on a bed of criss-crossed sticks. More sticks, or pieces of bark, were used to close off the depression, in order that the body might not be covered with earth. Burial took place in a lying or crouching posture in the niche, and it had to be completed by sunrise, otherwise the corpse might be stimulated to rise again and wander about. The grave of the head of a family had to have a bunghole, which could be closed by a boulder about the size of a clenched fist. The end of a rod was placed on the corpse's mouth, and the earth was trodden firm around the rod. Later the rod was pulled out, and the corpse was thus able to enjoy the sacrificial gifts, mostly palm wine and snuff.

Formerly, when important chiefs died, slaves were buried with them, to be their servants in the next world. If there were no slaves, someone from a neighbouring village was kidnapped and killed. It is reported¹ that in the case of particularly powerful chiefs, people were buried alive with them, which was thought to heighten the prestige of the dead man, both here and in the life beyond. Later on, animals were buried with the body instead.

The grave of the head of a household was in most cases in the house itself, or nearby.

1) Ittmann: Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Bd. 77, Heft 2, Braunschweig, 1952, p. 216. ff.

There are two distinct funeral rites. The first usually takes place between the third and the fifth day after death, and the second takes place on the ninth day (dibua dindene). In many districts the second ceremony may be postponed to an even later date, especially if not enough food or money are yet to hand, or if it should happen to be the rainy season, which would make an open-air gathering impossible. The main object of these festivities was and is to do honour to the deceased before the world of the living and that of the dead. This is supposed to help him to a corresponding position in the next world to that which he occupied in life. His famous deeds are expressed in dances, and made known to all the world in poem and song.

A Byang proverb truly says of most of these funeral rites: "When you are alive you are a rascal, but when you die you become a dear fellow".¹

8. Summary.

The birth of a child is a joyful event because through it the continuity of the lineage and family is guaranteed. The practices around the birth of a child are all for the protection of the child and the mother against baleful influences and for the good growth of the rising generation. The children grow naturally into the way of life of their parents and their surrounding by imitation and by listening to the adult members of the community. The course of initiation used to provide the younger generation with the necessary knowledge of the tribe's and the secret society's tradition and

1) Ittmann: Nyang Sprichwörter, p. 288.

made and strengthened the ties between the members of their age-set. Through the rites performed at the end of the course they became full members of the community and were then ready to take up their place as adult members of it. This whole educational system, if we may call it so, had its aim in preparing the individual for communal life and in making him conform to the rules of the community he lived in. A man's importance in his community grew with every step upwards which he took in life. The more important his position in this life was, the more important his position in the village of the dead would be.

There is an exact division between man's work and woman's. As work is often done in groups and as formerly the groups were organised into their respective secret societies according to their sex, so the solidarity of woman with woman and of man with man is stronger than the bond between husband and wife. It is like two circles which overlap in one place only; namely the all-important procreation of a new generation. To have no children is the worst that can happen to man or woman, because they are then without direct protection in old age; to die without children means that there is nobody to perform the funeral rites which are essential for entering into the village of the dead.

Through marriage the woman's lineage loses the services of one of its members and a potential child bearer. The man's lineage has to replace this loss by paying marriage payment. Through this payment the equilibrium between the lineages concerned is again

established. A marriage is therefore legal only when this payment has been made.

Both old men and women take a central position in the life of their surroundings; they are honoured and end their lives in the family circle. Old men play a leading role in the decisions of the secret societies, in making the offerings to the ancestors on behalf of their kin and they embody in a peculiar way the continuity and tradition of their lineage. The old man carries not only his own but the lineage's and the tribe's experience, wisdom and cunning; the older he is, the greater his wisdom is esteemed. The same applies in the case of old women. They know all the customs connected with birth and other dangerous periods in the life of man. Young people must therefore submit to the decrees of their seniors.

We see now how much the individual is an integral part of his community and how much his life, from birth to death, is embodied into this all-embracing order, which as an undivided entity rules over the world in general and, more particularly, the lineage and social life of the individual.

Par. 9. Religion and Ritual.

1. Witchcraft, Medicine and Divination.

In the previous paragraphs we established how far both the community and the individual, were embodied into an all-embracing order ruling over everything. And we also know how much it is the goal of them both (for traditionally it was impossible for an individual to detach himself from his kin) to see that the family

and the lineage would survive and grow in importance. The chief end of life was therefore to capture and retain the power of living. This power of living was and still is thought to be an invisible power in man. He can reinforce his own power of living, or so it is believed, by the power inherent in other creatures. This is, in the final analysis, the ground upon which ethical decisions and attitudes are judged. Everything that helps to maintain or increase this power of living is judged to be good, and everything that destroys or diminishes this power of living is bad. Now we have already seen how much the ancestors influence the fortune or misfortune of their living relatives. But apart from the ancestors there are other powers like all sorts of nature spirits. Above all there are the powers of Witchcraft and "Medicine" which have a very strong impact on the well-being of the community and of the individual.

The multiplicity of native customs, especially in this field, prevents us from describing them in detail. We therefore restrict ourselves to a description of their chief manifestations. The reader will hardly go wrong, however, if he appreciates that the ideas lying at the base of these customs and the principles of their application are the same throughout the whole region. Where possible we follow the terminology of E.E. Evans-Pritchard.¹

a) Witchcraft:

Witchcraft is "a supposed psychic emanation from witchcraft-substance which is believed to cause injury to health and property". This witchcraft-substance is "a material substance in the bodies of certain persons. It is discovered by autopsy (doma dibum) in the

1) Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande.

dead and is supposed to be diagnosed by oracles (ordeal = ho kwa) in the living".¹

Lemba means witchcraft, and mulemba is a witch or warlock. One does not procure lemba for oneself by the acquisition of certain medicines or through magic practices; nor does one get it through one's position in the family or in the secret society. It is considered much more as an unpleasant family inheritance. Lemba denotes witchcraft which seeks to harm another for motives of jealousy. The mulemba has no familiar. Nevertheless, owls, goat-suckers, the great millipede and other small animals, are believed to be messengers of a mulemba, and are killed or hunted wherever they are encountered. Formerly no mercy was shown to a mulemba. If the ordeal revealed someone as possessing lemba, he was struck dead, drowned or hanged; in less serious cases he may have been banished from the area or sold as a slave.

b) Nagualism.²

The individual has his familiar,³ a leopard, elephant, serpent, crocodile, or the like. This union with a beast gives the man a feeling of strength, but also leads him into danger. In addition to animals men can also "own" natural phenomena such as lightnings,

1) Ibid: p. 9-11. The Duala vernacular terms have been added in parentheses.

2) Chantepie de la Saussaye: Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte, Vol. I. p. 165-173.

K.Th.Preuss: Nagualismus, in R.G.G. Vol. IV.

3) bene nama = to have an animal.

rainbows, moon or stars.¹ Most of those who "possess" animals are organised into secret societies in which they appear dressed as spirits or as animals. The following example from E. Ardener² is a good illustration of such a society. Writing on the various classes of a Bakweri secret society he says: "Only in the three upper classes, and especially in the upper two, does a man have an elephant double. Such members are believed to derive various benefits from their power, as, for example, the ability to damage farms in their elephant form, and thus revenge themselves on their enemies. The chief benefit, however, is the ability to transport themselves at great speed from place to place, as from Mafanja to Buea (about 13 miles) in one hour. A Male member is believed to be able to transport others with him by linking hands with them and confusing their senses. If, however, a person is killed in his elephant form he himself is believed to die".

During the night, when the man's body is sleeping in the hut, the sleeper transfers his living soul to his animal. The beast is a second shell for the soul, in the form of an animal. This magic bond makes his beast of service to the man, but also causes him to suffer everything that happens to the animal. Man and beast are one being with two bodies. If the beast is injured in the bush the man feels pain in the same place. The death of the one drags the

1) J. Ittmann: *Volkskundliche und religiöse Begriffe*, p. 49.

2) *Coastal Bantu of the Cameroons*, p. 68.

other down to the grave with it.

Ewusu is a kind of medicine used for one's own benefit and for the downfall of others. It is acquired through a medicine man. Nevertheless this faculty belongs to the powers which the secret society transmits to its members. One may boast of one's ewusu, and distinguished people occasionally do so. Possession of ewusu can be determined by post-mortem examination. Ewusu transmitted through the secret society procures authority and protection and facilitates production as the following example demonstrates: "The oil-farmers of the Bakundu group boast, for example, of their affinity with parrots, flying squirrels and chimpanzees. They see themselves as parrots, flying to the palms on which bunches of ripe fruit are hanging; as flying squirrels they cling to the palm closely, so that they may not fall; should they fall, however, their affinity with the chimpanzees help them, and they stand up uninjured, relieve themselves, and go safe and sound to their huts."¹

c) The "filled" man.

The Cameroonian generally has little faith in physical or intellectual powers unless enhanced and protected by magic means. This magic-physical or magic-mental power makes its owner a "filled one".

The mulondedi² is in full possession of this power. Through enchantment, dances and incantations he can turn it to his own use,

1) Ittmann: Volkskundliche und Religiöse Begriffe; p. 21.

2) Mulondedi = the filled man, from londa = to fill.

to that of the group, and also to that of others. He has to submit to initiations and mysteries, and to observe certain taboo rules. If he should not observe these rules, the "power" may injure not only himself, but those of his immediate circle.

Balondedi are usually either medicine men or high-up members of a secret society. They are, because of their extraordinary "powers" much respected and honoured by their fellow-men.

When a mulondedi dies, he often becomes a revenant. Because of his indwelling powers, which even death cannot take away, he does not perish, but continues to go about, harassing the living. Only the most powerful means avail against such ghosts. For instance medicines are burnt in or on top of the partly dug up grave, and finally the body is exhumed and burnt. The ashes are scattered to the wind, or carried away by running water. If anyone is suspected before he is buried of possibly becoming a revenant, all sorts of precautions are taken to prevent this. His hands and feet are slit, his head stuck in a pot, and his body, laid stomach downwards, is surrounded by thorns. In many places such men are buried in a distant part of the forest, which is taboo.

d) Maledictions and Curses.

Malediction and curses should also be considered in this section. If a curse is uttered against someone, the people believe that it will work, unless removed by some other magic formula. In what follows, we give the different grades of malediction, from the weaker to the stronger.

myema = cursing, enchantment, which take away a man's good qualities and blessings. Yemane = to hurl imprecations at a person.

eboma = a curse, strong invective. Eboma is also used for a symbolical action which curses a man.

Bola moto eboma = to curse someone.

benä = to hate, to bear ill-will. Dibena = hatred, ill-will. Topo dibena = to revile, to hurl abuse. Dibena harms a man like a curse or malediction, which will some day work, if not counteracted.

mboma = curse, swear-word. There is a power in the mboma which can be more harmful in its effects than dibena. It may be innocent, and only meant as a threat, but, allied to certain gestures, such as raising the hands to heaven, or striking the ground with a "swear stone"¹ it can be a serious matter.

ngad'a mudumbu = gun of the mouth. This is a much-feared form of magic, in which a human leg bone, if possible that of an albino, is put in the mouth, and a concoction, mixed with needles, "blown into the body" of the enemy through it. Instead of this magic action, a curse or malediction uttered in the direction of the person to be harmed may work as ngad'a mudumbu.

mbaki is a curse, oath, guilt, through murder (of humans, big game and certain trees) or through the breath of faith. In the case of such deaths something passes from the murdered man to his killer, which works upon him revengefully and destructively, unless he protects himself by magic means. This "something" is mbaki. It passes, too, to anyone who comes near the man charged with mbaki. Further, anyone who breaks an oath which he has sworn by a demon, or whoever breaks the blood-bond, brings mbaki upon himself as does the man who touches an unknown corpse which he has found.

1) mudiki

mbena means a curse, and all that the curse signifies. In contradistinction to mbaki, blood-guilt caused by a definite action which must be expiated, mbena is a curse under which one comes, mostly unwittingly, through black magic. This curse shows itself through inexplicable disasters, or the appearance of witch-beasts in dreams.

kele means to shun someone, to draw back from him, to boycott him. Anyone ostracised by the group because a curse on him has been uttered, is excluded from the religious and other activities of the community. He is deprived of wife and children, all aid is forbidden to him, and his vital power is withdrawn.

Every malediction or curse must be lifted by a sacrifice or other magic spell.

e) Medicines.

We have already seen that the mulondedi is a man armed with special powers. There are, however, a great variety of objects filled with similar "powers" which are brought into use for differing purposes and are called "medicines". All these "medicines" go under the name of "bwanga".¹

Bwanga (sing.) or myanga (plur.) consist of:-

- (i) Powers which inhabit such natural objects as the bark of trees, leaves, weeds, stones or bones. These can be used by the initiated for the benefit or otherwise of his fellows. By mixing several of such things, and by incantations and dances, the mot'a bwanga can concentrate and increase these powers.
- (ii) All articles which may be carriers of this power.

1) bwanga = means of power, medicine.

mot'a bwanga = doctor, medicine man.

- (iii) Every medium prepared by the mot'a bwanga, such as (a) medicines, in the usual sense of the word, which may be applied externally through massage, sprinkling, poultices, eyedrops; or internally by drinking or enema: (b) All means taken to protect man and beast, home and field, products of tree or land from harmful powers, theft or curses. These means are usually, though not always, prepared by the mot'a bwanga: (c) Town medicine to protect the village and the land.
- (iv) Everything used as an oracle.
- (v) Everything belonging to the secret society, and which gives the balondedi his "power".

Thus everything employed in public or private customs in myanga. The following examples may illustrate what we said above:

Bwanga in a Cassa'va Farm.¹

This "medicine" is prepared by a mot'a bwanga to protect the crops from theft. It consists of the bone of a tortoise tied to a stick. If anyone steals from this field the tortoise will enter his stomach and stamp around with his thick legs until the thief gets terrible stomach-ache and confesses his crime. He can be cured by an antidote.

Bwanga in a farm of Coco Yam.²

This farm is also protected by a "medicine" prepared by a mot'a bwanga. The horn was filled with something whose "power" makes a thief ill.

If we compare these two "medicines" we find a fundamental difference.

1) See table 4.

2) See table 5.

TABLE 4.

BWANGA IN A CASSA'VA FARM

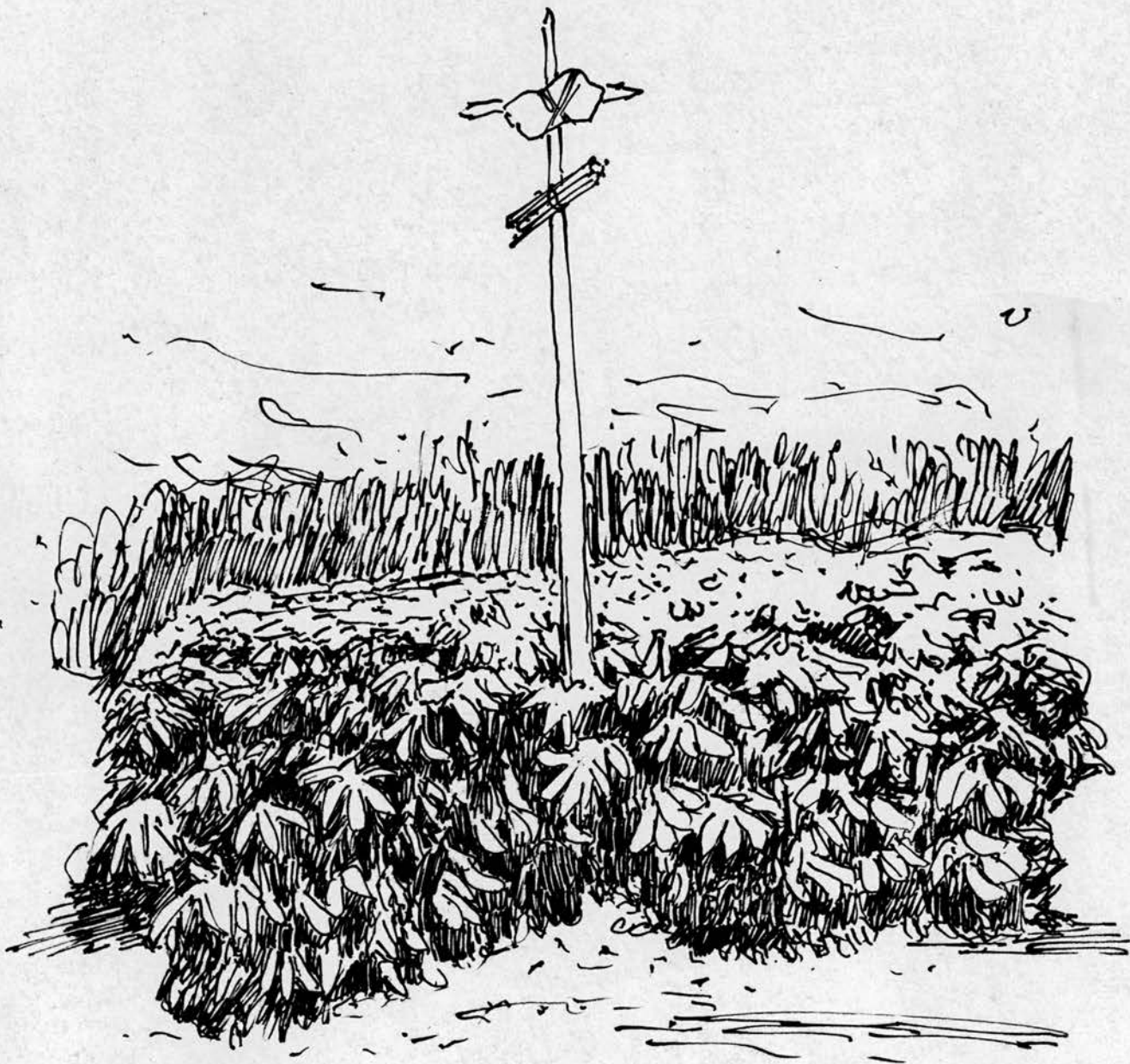
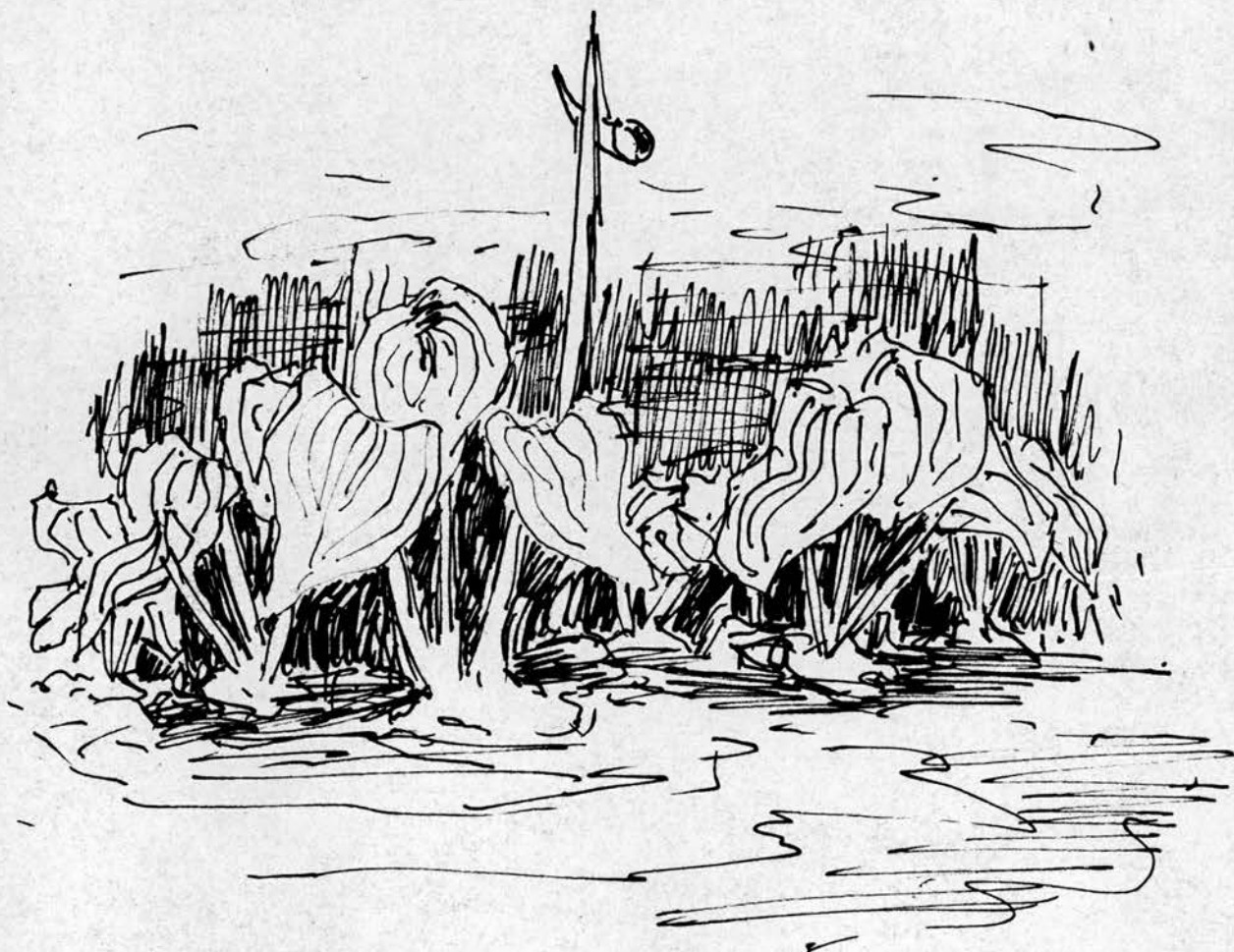


TABLE 5.**BWANGA IN A COCO YAM FARM**

In the first, we have a kind of sympathetic magic. The thief sees the tortoise bones, and therefore knows what is in store for his stomach.

In the second, he simply sees the horn and knows that its power will affect him. Any kind of illness may break out in him. Anything is possible, from swellings in his legs to insanity.

An indication follows of various "medicines"¹ which all, like the first, show the thief, or him who curses crops or other things, what is going to happen to him.

Village medicine "Mfam"²

We find this "medicine" above all in the lower part of the Mamfe Division, whence it has spread very widely over the whole district during the past few generations. In constructing the Mfam shown in the picture, a hole was dug, water poured into it, the "medicine" placed in it, and the two rubber trees planted above it. The effect is usually to cause dropsy. The two trees, male and female, represent the unity and fruitfulness of the family. Under the trees there lie, arranged in a circle, stones on which the "possessors" of the Mfam deliberate, and make affirmations on oath. A little hut stands near the trees, in which medicine, which obviously received its "power" from this Mfam, and which is also known as Mfam, is kept. The chief medicine consists of two horns, filled with "medicine" and sealed. In this form Mfam was sold throughout the land.³ The "medicine"

1) See table 6 and 7.

2) See table 8.

3) H. Wildi: Im Schatten des Geheimbundes, p. 122-131.
Afam = Mfam.

TABLE 6."Medicine"


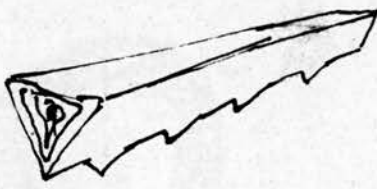



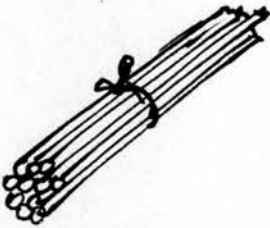
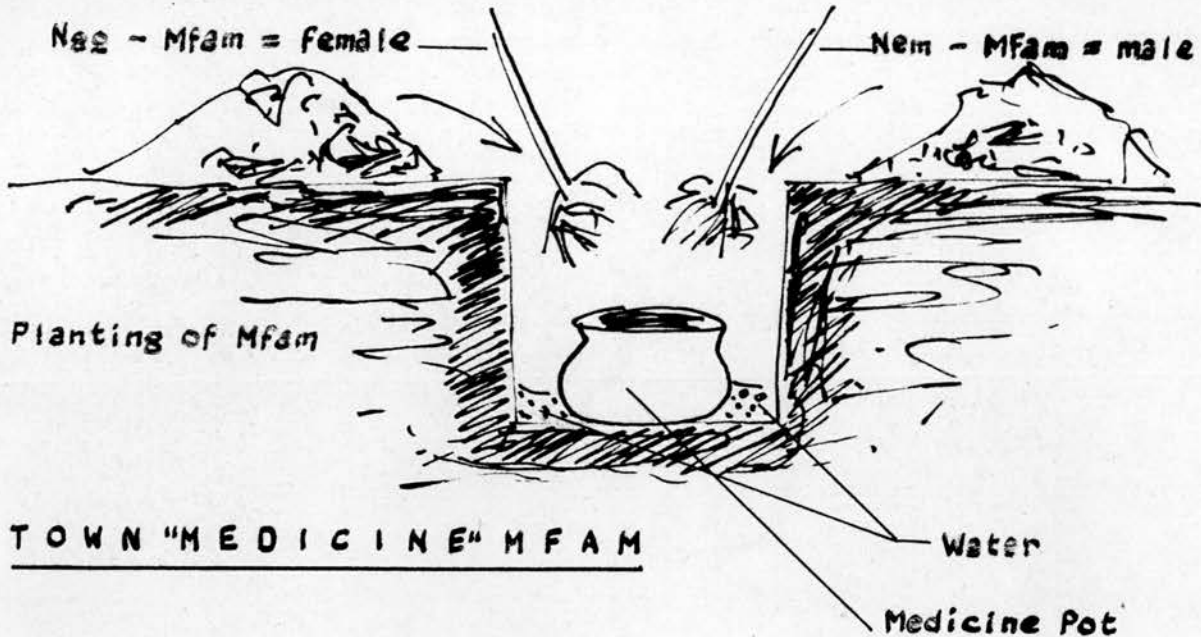
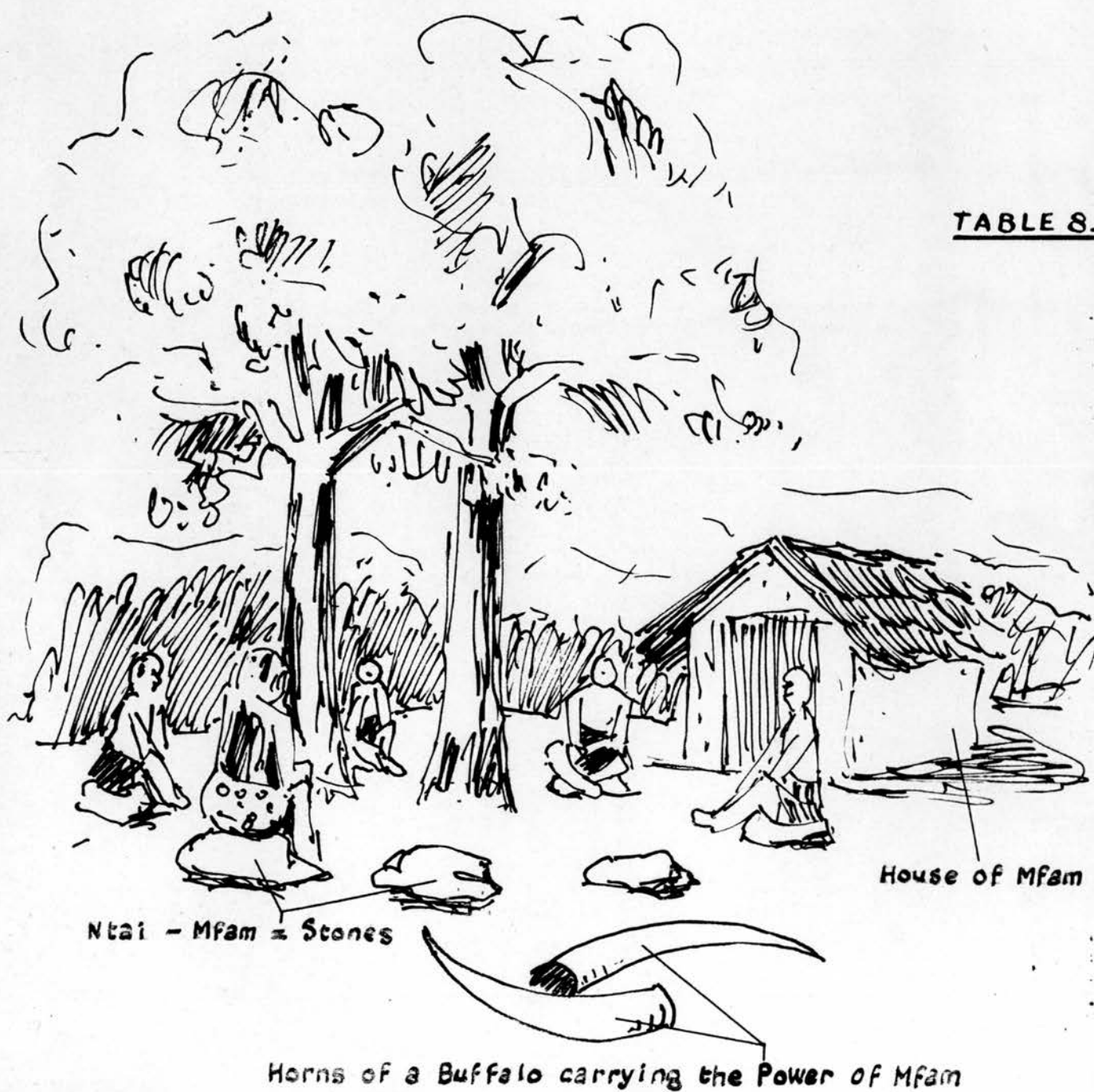
	<p>Object: bones of a tortoise</p> <p>Image: a tortoise walking inside the belly</p> <p>Effect: gripes, colic</p>
	<p>Object: toothed palm - leaf nerve</p> <p>Image: teeth</p> <p>Effect: toothache</p>
	<p>Object: plant stems with a high water content</p> <p>Image: water or sweat</p> <p>Effect: Fever</p>

TABLE 7"Medicine"

	<p>Object: plant stems of a bulbous fruit</p> <p>Image: growth and bursting of the bulb</p> <p>Effect: swellings</p>
	<p>Object: knotted liana</p> <p>Image: curled up millipede permanently turning round the navel</p> <p>Effect: pain in the region of the navel</p>
	<p>Object: hard, dry plant stems</p> <p>Image: dry bones</p> <p>Effect: rheumatic pains</p>

TABLE 8.

is hung on the inside or outside wall of its owner's house. This owner then becomes the chief servant of the Mfam, and is comparable to a priest. Often a group of older men may be co-partners in the possession of the Mfam. A village greeting to it is quoted below from Ittmann:

"In bringing the Mfam into a Banyangi village the inhabitants shouted: "Hearken, O Mfam! We give our settlement into thy hands, that thou mayest be our protector. Therefore, whoever lies down among us without sleeping, but goes around (as a witch) with the intention of waxing fat on others (or eating other people up), we give over to thee, that thou mayest strike his head seven times upon the ground" whereupon the person concerned falls ill, and perishes, unless the Mfam sets him free on atonement being made".¹

f) Divination.

In this section we have to distinguish between (a) the interpretation of signs and fortune-telling by a soothsayer using an oracle; and (b) the second sight of a woman in a hysterical trance.

(a) "Nrambi e ben mot'a mukoti", literally "Sorcery hates a poor man" means "Whoever does not pay and bribe the magician or soothsayer well, is not in good repute with him, and will not get his rights."²

1) J. Ittmann: *Volkskundliche und Religiöse Begriffe*, p. 38.

2) Hecklinger: *Duala Sprichwörter*, p. 231.

With Ittmann¹ we must distinguish four groups of oracles² which are interpreted by the fortune-teller.

1. The shaking oracle.
2. The spider oracle.
3. The throwing oracle.
4. The listening oracle.

(1) The Shaking Oracle. There are in a small plate basket or bark box about 70-80 pangolin³ scales with all kinds of notches on them. Further, there are all sorts of articles representing air, earth and water. The strongest of all, a crystal or a small horn filled with a magic preparation, must not be lacking. Teeth also, and claws, bones and cartilages of animals, birds and fish are also in the basket. Thus has a man incorporated in his ngambi, pars pro toto, all the powers that work and hold sway on earth. These "bearers of power" are laid on the ground. Then the interpreter shakes the scales remaining in the basket, which are only empty symbols, calling the while on his ancestors and teachers. He throws them over the objects on the ground, setting aside those which have nothing to do with the matter in question, and reaching his decision from the position of the remainder. It is also necessary to note whether the scales are lying right or wrong way up.

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- 1) J. Ittmann: Volkskundliche und Religiöse Begriffe, p.47-48, from which part of the following is quoted.
 - 2) ngambi = oracle, magic. mot'a ngambi = magician, interpreter of oracles. Sese ngambi = to interpret oracles.
 - 3) "ka" = the pangolin armadillo (E. Dinkelacker: Wörterbuch der Duala Sprache, p. 37.)

(2) Spider oracle. The oracle, earth or bird spider¹ is used for this. In the evening, leaves of the ngwaban² (marked like the scales mentioned above) are scattered in front of the spider's hole, and the spider is called upon to give information. In the morning the answer is read in the position of the leaves which the spider has moved. Or the shells of coloured beans may be put in front of the hole, and in the morning it is noted whether the shells are lying with the curved side upwards or downwards. This kind of oracle can only answer "yes" or "no".

(3) Throwing oracle. Two rinds of jiba³ in which holes have been bored are tied together with string. The interpreter whirls this pair of rinds round his hands and drops them on the ground, in order to read the answer from their position.

(4) Hearing oracle. The interpreter listens to an antelope or cattle horn filled with magic ingredients, and thus obtains the answer to his client's question.

There are quite a number of lesser oracles which are called upon for decisions. There are also many signs in nature which are looked upon as good or bad omens for undertakings which are about to take place.

(b) As we have already stated, the various kinds of second sight or clairvoyance (edinge⁴) are matters for women. The clairvoyant

1) dibobe la ngambi

2) Psidium Guajava.

3) bwiba = Irvingia Barteri.

4) edinge - soothsaying, clairvoyance. ko edinge = to become clairvoyant. topo bedinge = to tell fortunes, to prophesy. koma bedinge = to be possessed, fall into a trance; to pour out prophecies to utter.

gets an "open head",¹ that is to say, she can see what lies in store for the individual, the village or the country. There are two kinds of bedinge: (i) bejongo, which attacks women involuntarily, as, for example, somnambulism; (ii) ediedie which is brought on artificially.

(i) bejongo. As a general rule young women are those most prone to be affected by this condition, in which they can prophesy. Such a woman is shaken with fever, and those around her do not know at first that it is going to lead to bejongo. She sits by the fire to warm herself, but towards evening she will grow worse, and later goes into a trance, so they know what sort of condition she is in. She is held down, that she may not damage herself in her convulsions. She cries out that spirits² are oppressing her with all kinds of messages. She is tied up in a mat, and then delivers to the bystanders messages from the spirits of their ancestors. If the person named is not present, she cries out wildly and reproaches the absentee with having ancestors and caring nothing for them. She also gives other information. Someone may perhaps ask his departed relatives to recommend a medicine for a sick person. When she has given all the messages, and answered all the questions through the ancestors, she will mention a plant as a remedy, whose juice they drop in her eyes. When she wakes up she has no recollection of what has happened.

(ii) ediedie³. By special means, such as ecstatic singing and

1) a makusa mulopo mu telam = she has got an open head.

2) bedimo

3) ediedie from dia = to find.

dances, a state of clairvoyance was induced in a woman. The custom was practiced on ground from which all stones had been removed - usually on sand, so that the woman, who had fallen into a hypnotic sleep, would not hurt herself. She threw herself on the ground and was racked by fearful convulsions. When she was cold and stiff she was bound in a mat and laid in a hut near the fireplace. There she began to speak as medium of the spirits who wanted to manifest themselves to individuals or to the group, and of whom questions could be asked through the medium.

2. God.

As Europeans, and as Christians in particular, we have to be very cautious when we are investigating religious practices and beliefs of non-Christian people. There is the great danger that we may start to analyse and explain these practices and beliefs from the point of view of Western psychology, especially in terms of individual psychology. It is our aim to discover in what way religious conceptions and practices are interconnected and in what way religious facts are bound up with other kinds of social facts. In primitive society, as E.E. Evans-Pritchard rightly says¹, religious rites are "performed in relation to vital events and dominant interests: birth, initiation, marriage, sickness, death, hunting, animal husbandry, and so on; and they are intimately concerned also with family and kinship interests and with political institutions". It can therefore not be our task to "explain" religion, but to show the relation of religion to social life in general. If this was true of our discussion of the

1) The Institutions of Primitive Society; p. 5-6.

practices of magic, witchcraft and medicines it must be all the more true regards the following presentation of the idea the Natives have of God and its function, if any, it has in society.

Two great difficulties stand in our way here and prevent a clear and express exposition of the idea the Natives have of God. The first of these is that in the areas where different tongues and dialects are used, there are distinct names for one and the same "God". The second difficulty is that after so many years of missionary work the Christian conception of God has partly been assimilated by the native conception.¹ It is, moreover, not easy to gain enlightenment on this topic as "God" in the lives of these people is a conception which they do not make explicit. Nevertheless, certain ideas are known, and we shall try to indicate them in what follows. We are indebted above all to Ittmann's work, Gottesvorstellungen und Gottesnamen im vordern Kamerun.

The thoughts of our people centre on two ideas. One is the name connected with the ancestor cult and with fertility rites. It changes according to the various races. For instance, East of the Mongo River it comes from the old Bantu root word - gambe, which changes little through Grimm's law in the various languages. West of the Mongo River as far as Calabar they speak of obase, and in the upper part of the Cross River area they say mandem. But at the same time the highest meaning is assigned to the names for "heaven", "sun", li-guva in old Bantu. By Grimm's Law this word took on a changing

1) E. Ardener; *ibid*, p. 92: Writing on the Ovase of the Kpe says: "No further attempt to explain the nature of the high-god in the past is likely to be fruitful owing to the effect of Christianity."

form with the different races, but everywhere in the lower Cameroons the meaning remained the same. Here we shall use the Duala word for God, "loba".¹ The following points revolve round these two groups of names.

1. The name of God connected with the Ancestor Cult.

The name whose root is the aforementioned old Bantu word - gambe or names in other Cameroon dialects corresponding with it is called upon in the ancestor cult and fertility rites along with the forebears who are now among the shades. How the name of the ancestral deity and that of the ancestors hang together etymologically is not clear. But whatever be the reason, the names hambe, or obase, or mandem are at all events so closely bound up with the bedimo that the Bakundu, for instance, call upon him as "obas'a melimo = ancestral deity. The ancestor cult is thus at the same time hambe, obase or mandem cult. Hence the type and place of worship and the seat of this deity are evident in the ancestor cult and fertility rites.

The Bakosi and their neighbours round the Kupe and Maneguba fostered this cult of the dead particularly intensively. According to Grimm's Law of sound-shifting, the ancestral deity hambe should have been called "hame" there, but in point of fact he is called mwa-hame.² In addition to "ancestral deity" this also means "Ancestor", the departed" and "aged man with grey hair". Furthermore, the plural

1) This name is particularly interesting, as it was employed for the Christian "God".

2) Ittmann: *ibid*, p. 224

"be-~~hame~~" means "the shades, the ancestors". With the prefix "mwa" added to the name of the founder of a clan, the place names and names of clans are betokened in that region. For example, according to tradition the names of the sons of Asume, the founder of the Bakosi tribe were Nyo, Etuge, Asume Ndem, and his daughter's name was Etane. Thereafter the clans of the tribe were known as mwa Nyo, mw'Etug, mw'Asume Ndem, mw'Etan. The names of villages in that area are mw'Ebag = clan of Ebag; mw'Aku, mw'Abi, mw'Along, etc. Thus mwa-~~hame~~ was the merging of all the be~~hame~~, or ancestor spirits, or bedimo derived from hame, and only through abstraction did it become the ancestral deity whose original simpler name is no longer employed among the tribes in that district.

The whole thing is analogous to the earthly hierarchy. At the head of the homestead stands the head of the family, at the head of the lineage, its elders, and at the head of the clan stands the head of the lineage which has assumed the leadership on account of his descent and riches. It is absolutely necessary for every member of the community to recognise this hierarchy. The spirit world is organised correspondingly. At the invocation, a man will first name his dead father, then the head of the family, the lineage head, the founder of the tribe, and lastly the ancestors of related tribal groups. Above all, however, is mwa-~~hame~~, the ancestral deity, towering above tribe and tribal groups. Just as the member of a family does not come directly to the tribal chief, but approaches him through the mediation of his own chief, so also is it with the ancestral deity, in the other world.

Through the bedimo men have access to the ancestral deity, which stands at the head of all ancestors, even those of other groups as well. Therefore his name is also easily expressed in other words, such as "the eternal, the unchangeable, the creator". It is not easy to discover whether this ancestral deity is conceived as a personal God. He is always invoked along with the ancestors, and when the tribes of the Bakundu group speak of obas'a melimo = ancestral deity, they see in him, just as the Bakosi group see in mwa-name the rather abstract conception of the totality of the ancestors, and occasionally give him the title of sango = lord, father, in the same way as they do to the ancestors. The idea of personality was certainly not connected with this ancestral deity from the beginning, however, otherwise his names would have been classified as personal nouns, which is the case in none of the languages concerned. But the conception of personality is easily transmitted to him, since the spirits with whom he is so closely bound up were once persons. The narrowness of the idea of the ancestral deity lies in the fact that it is solely concerned with the ancestor cult and fertility rites. It does not bridge the gap between the lineages and tribes and the other world. Other worldliness is not peculiar to the ancestral deity, since the mundi ma bedimo is not outside this world.

Nambe, obase, mandem is might, present, knowing, for those within the group concerned with the fertility cult, but not all inclusive

not almighty, omnipresent, or omniscient.

2. The name of God connected with Heaven.

Loba, from the Bantu root li-guva = sun, heaven, is a widely spread word. It means in Duala and kindred dialects "heaven, firmament", and so "the shining, the pure". Also many tribes use it for "the sun".

Loba is thus first of all a place; and a place in which men live. But these men are not dark-skinned¹ but light-skinned². Already the old fairy-tales of swallowing³ distinguished these two kinds of men. When the hero has slain the monster and opened up his stomach so that the world of men which he has swallowed can escape, they draw themselves up in two companies, dark and light, and extol the hero, their deliverer. Suddenly, with a terrific thunder-clap the light-skinned are raised and enter loba = a heaven, where they lead a life just like that of the dark-skinned on earth, except for the fact that they never suffer want, as they would here. Everything is provided in plenty.

Formerly there were comings and goings between heaven and earth. People from earth could ascend a sort of rope ladder and cultivate friendship with the people in heaven. An impudent earth man once infringed the regulations obtaining above, however, and appropriated

1) mindó

2) mbongo

3) Verschlingemärchen aus dem vordern Kamerun. Zusammengestellt von J. Ittmann.

something that did not belong to him, whereupon those above pulled the ladder up into heaven, to save themselves any further disturbance of the peace.

We said that the dead enter the mundi ma bedimo, but this does not apply to everyone. Anyone who for any reason¹ has been unable to get proper burial does not enter the mundi ma bedimo, since the funeral rites open its doors. These people go to heaven, where the completely different, the incalculable, the abnormal have their abode. Whenever a child was born to a family after such a death, it was given the name of the departed, who was never given another thought. He had entered an absolutely different world. Furthermore, people came from this world of the entirely other, so incalculable, and so inaccessible to normal men even after death. Such people are regarded as abnormal-albinos and twins.

Are the former not like the light-coloured inhabitants of heaven? Neither do they have the dark, quiet eyes of ordinary men. Therefore it is a heavy burden on a mother's heart, and, indeed, on the whole family, when an unpigmented baby is born. Formerly an albino was not buried in the earth, since he did not belong to the underworld. His body was laid between the gnarled roots of a silk-cottong tree² and covered with twigs. Albinos' bones are especially popular in the preparation of medicine.³

1) See par. 8. Death.

2) buma = Ceiba pentandre

3) That the whites in this country were looked on from the beginning as special beings, and are still esteemed superior, has one of its last roots in the opinion of the people that these light-skinned people must come from a special place, and their superiority is therefore quite understandable.

People are even more disturbed by the birth of twins than of albinos. From birth onwards they are under special taboo rules, which make their upbringing more difficult than is the case with single children.

In the circumstances so far described, heaven is conceived as a place in which people are living. But heaven can also speak like a person, for example when it thunders. "The people believe that the firmament we see is a "little heaven" built up of airy clouds, which at night is magnificently caparisoned with stars, and out of which the moon slips once a month, forcing itself laboriously through, only to pull itself slowly back again. The "little heaven" looks down on the activities of men, and is greatly amused thereby. Above and behind this superficial image, however, is another heaven, built of heavy stones. It also looks through the clouds at what men are doing here below, and knows that often it is not good. The evil actions of mankind often arouse its wrath, and then it shouts with a loud voice to the little heaven, making men afraid: "Make Way! I am going to fall down and cover everything, so that these shameful doings may cease". But the little heaven answers in the gentler peals of thunder: "Oh, wait! Don't do that! I always enjoy everything that goes on down there. Please let me have my fun!" And the powerful voice of the stone heaven dies away as the thunderstorm withdraws".¹

1) Ittmann: *ibid*; p. 256.

So to the man of the Cameroons heaven is not only a place. It speaks like a person. Loba is thus the one who sits in judgment over the affairs of mankind, and condemns the bad.

The sun is in heaven - the most striking phenomenon there, and the one which has the property of lightening the darkness. The verb sanga = to become white, clear, or clean also means that a thing has no dealings with the powers of darkness; thus, to be clean. It is quite possible that for this reason an ethical power is imagined behind the sun, which is unfriendly to what is dark and evil. As such, the sun is known by many tribes as diso la loba = "heaven's or God's eye", by others merely as loba = "heaven, God". If someone hears another say something unseemly, or sees him do something he ought not to do, he may reproach him with the words: "How can you say or do that, when diso la loba up there sees everything.

Scarcity and physical want are brought before nambe in the fertility rite, but whoever gets into difficulties or inner need, through the fault of others, turns his gaze heavenwards and invokes loba as helper, witness, avenger and judge. Thus a man may say, to lend strength to an assertion: mbal'a loba = the truth of loba. In affliction one may call: Loba a bi = loba knows of it: and a man may fix his hopes on loba with the words: Loba longwane! = loba will help!

It was a solemn moment for every family when its elder, at the first appearance of the sickle moon, went out to his yard and himself discharged the priestly office in prayer. It was strictly

taboo to make a noise or to quarrel in the huts during prayer. With the words: "The old man is speaking to loba "mothers kept their little ones quiet, and the adults listened mutely to their elder's call. The prayers were all extempore, born of the moment, but had a traditional form, which anyone could compose, but was only to be used by the elder.

Two prayers will serve as examples:¹

"Thou God! A request!

As now the new sickle moon stands on high,

So make everything pertaining to me new!

Give me new things!

I have done wrong to no man, nor envied my brother.

If I have killed anyone in the bush I do not know of it.

But thou knowest all things. Forgive me!

I come to Thee, so throw me not into the fiery pit,

Neither into that on the left hand nor into that on the right,

But give me a good place between them!"

"Thou, Loba! A request; God, a request!

As the moon is new

Let serious illness and all misfortune depart!

Let anyone who thinks evil of me in enmity

Be with his wicked plans confounded,

And his intentions fall upon his own head!

Thou God, a request, a request!"

1) Both prayers were translated from Ittmann: Gottesvorstellungen und Gottesnamen im vorderen Kamerun.

According to what has gone before, hambe was originally conceived as the "giver" and loba as the "judge". It is hardly surprising that it can no longer be easily determined today what exactly was and is ascribed to one or the other.

Par.10. Synopsis.

The material presented in this chapter demonstrates the importance of our claim that in the Cameroons there was and in backward areas there still is an almost complete interdependence of all departments of life. There is no division between the economic, social and religious aspects of life. This is true even if it is not to be assumed, as Daryll Forde¹ with his wide knowledge of primitive society states, "that the views and attitudes of a people concerning the duties of men among themselves and their relations to the universe are necessarily all of one piece". He further says, that "anthropological studies of many cultures have shown that even in small and comparatively isolated societies, where differences of wealth, rank, and power are small, there need be no complete integration of belief and doctrine, still less the domination of conduct in all spheres by a single system of beliefs or basic ideas. For both the historical sources of knowledge and belief and the contexts of activity in which these are evoked are likely even in a circumscribed world, to be diverse. On the other hand, there is reason to believe that a close relation exists between dominant attitudes towards social relations and the proper use of resources and established beliefs concerning the nature of human society and its place in a

1) African Worlds; Introduction, p.vii.

wider universe of cosmic forces".

In this thesis we are not so much concerned with particular beliefs as with these dominant attitudes. Because it is these dominant attitudes, as we shall show in part two of this thesis, which have a strong influence on the development of belief and practice in the Christian Church.

Let us in short recapitulate the main contents of traditional structure and beliefs. The chief end of the traditional community is its continuity and well-being, or in other words, the preservation of life and the harmony that exists throughout nature. We have seen how the beliefs and practices of traditional society can only be understood in their social context. For example the relationship between the ancestors in the village of the dead to their descendants in the village becomes important in a case of barrenness of a related woman. Or witchcraft, as a destructive power, is only dealt with in case of misfortune or illness. Or on the other hand a man may strengthen his power, i.e., his social position in the community, through "medicines" or by a familiar. Daryll Forde says that: "Under primitive conditions of life and in the absence of a coherent body of scientific theory so much more lies beyond the reach of naturalistic explanation, so much more elicits interpretation and action in terms of the mysterious agents called into being in response to hopes and needs. Beliefs of this order are not capable of verification but neither do they require it. In such spheres the people of Africa, like those of the West and, indeed, all mankind save the tiny minority which is able to suspend belief, have adopted theories that project on the plane of supernatural

action the desires and aspirations that they know in the realm of human action".¹

It is on this basis that we are now able to appreciate Kraemer's² statement; saying that in this connection there arises a kind of thinking that can be described, as he says, as "totalitarian" and which, to avoid misunderstanding, we might better call "holistic". By this we mean a concern or a thinking that is steeped in a cosmic mythological view of the totality of existence. This means in practice that the whole life of the individual and of the community is lastly concerned with, and pointing towards, this chief end of the traditional community, namely life, i.e., the continuity of the family and lineage. We further maintain that this type of holistic thinking³ may be more adequately understood when conceived as a primitive pattern of philosophy and science than as religion. Of course, as Kraemer rightly points out, it is a "thoroughly synthetic and concrete way of thinking" which has "the opposite tendency from the analysing, isolating way of modern, scientific thinking". It is not put down in books and codes but is passed on from one generation to the next through custom and tradition. "One might therefore more adequately call it emotional thinking, because thinking is in this case not yet the abstract, differentiated activity of the human mind as we, not wholly correctly, assume it to be in philosophical thought; but it is the activity of the thinking, willing and feeling animal man is in common life."⁴

1) Ibid; p.xi.

2) See the introductions to this chapter.

3) Kraemer calls it monistic thinking!

4) The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World: p.151-152.

This thinking and feeling expresses itself in the religious thoughts and practices of the people. Religion in the Cameroonian society is not an individual matter, but it is a social phenomenon, something general, traditional and obligatory. It is therefore in the religious rites which are usually performed in relation to vital events and dominant interests like: birth, initiation, marriage, sickness, death, hunting, animal husbandry, planting and harvesting that the unity and scope of the traditional society may be seen and understood. The religious aspect of life covers, as we have seen in the ancestor cult and the practices of the secret societies, also the family and kinship interests and the political institutions. From this we see that religion covers in fact the whole life of the community and includes also the world the community lives in. Everyone and everything has its place in this all-embracing order and is classified¹ according to its importance and after the role it is to play in this whole.

There is one further point in which traditional thinking goes ways foreign to the normal western mind and which we must elaborate because it will preoccupy us again in relation to the Christian's understanding of the sacraments. In connection with the various "medicines" we pointed out how, traditionally, the symbols connected with these powers of intervention can be of great significance. There is no differentiation between the sign and the thing denoted, between appearance and existence. But this way of conceiving is not limited to medicines. They do in the same way not differentiate between the secret society member who wears an animal's mask,

1) Kraemer calls this a classificatory way of thinking which is a primitive form of philosophy and science.

and the mask; he is an animal, in the same way as the boys who in the course of initiation, smeared themselves with white earth, were spirits.

This way of conceiving is very difficult for the modern western mind to follow. It is so difficult that for a time some European scholars spoke of a pre-logical thinking¹. We know that they are not ignorant of such differences as mentioned above, but that in none of the situations in which they are involved is there any point in drawing such a distinction. The capacity to differentiate is not actualised because the circumstances of traditional life do not require it. In what then is their failure to differentiate grounded? As it can't be neurological, it must lie in custom. D. Westermann gives us a good analysis of the problem²: "The world of the primitive African is characterised by its unity and coherence. No sharply defined aspect exists by itself; wish and reality, the possible and the impossible, knowledge and belief, thought and imagination, the realms of secular and religious life are interwoven and fundamentally one. Things which we distinguish are to him identical in their essence". "The tendency of primitive man to regard essentially different things as similar is partly explained by his egocentric attitude. He feels himself to be the centre of his world. He names objects in his environment after the parts of his body, and values them according to whether they harm or help him. In the same manner he transfers to them his own human qualities, attributing to them his needs and desires, his love and hate, his capacity for action, with the result that he treats them in the same way as his fellow men,

1) L. Levy-Bryhl, *La Mentalite Primitive*.

2) *The African Today and Tomorrow*; p. 83-86.

trying to gain their support and use their help in removing imminent danger. It might therefore be said that he personifies the objects surrounding him, though it is more correct to say that he places things on the same level as himself".¹ Then writing about the belief of Africans that a man may have his familiar, he says: "Men change into animals, and animals into men. A crocodile leaves the water, hangs up his skin on a tree and takes part in a game as a man with the men of the village. A buffalo trades as a human being in the market as other men do, and changes on his way home once more into a buffalo. A man roams at night round the village as a leopard, is shot, and on the next day he is found again as a person, lying wounded on his mat. In these beliefs, which are found amongmost West African tribes, there is a complete identification of form and character. The man, in assuming the form of an animal, whether, as in the above example, by direct magic meta-morphosis or by wearing the mask or the skin of an animal, really becomes the animal in question; form, conditions, character."²

Then Westermann goes on writing about these identifications which form such a problem for the modern western mind: "These identifications are, however, not followed to their logical conclusions, and they do not mean that the African is incapable of making distinctions. He does so where necessary; the class system of the Bantu languages shows a subtlety in differentiation such as no European languages have. However, things may be different in one aspect,

1) Ibid; p. 83.

2) Ibid; p. 84.

but in another, namely, in their power of doing harm or good, they are not essentially distinguished. Vestiges of such a complex attitude are extant among ourselves, when in our fairytales animals and trees talk. With us, however, this fairy-world is real at the most in childhood and vanishes later.

For us the most important fact about all these practices described, from witchcraft to divination, is not to know how they work, but the reason why they are used! And what interests us most is to see later on how this way of conceiving is also carried over into the Christian Church.

It has now become clear, that the background material provided in this chapter can only be understood if it is seen as part of a whole; and life cycle, death rites, secret societies, magic and medicine only receive their full meaning seen together as an entity and understood against this underlaying "philosophical system"! We shall in the second part of this dissertation try to show in what way this traditional background influences the growth and development of the Church.

Part 2.

THE IMPACT OF THE TRADITIONAL WELTANSCHAUUNG AND
OF THE CULTURE CONTACTS ON THE NATIVES' UNDERSTANDING
OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE RESULTING MISCONCEPTIONS
IN THOUGHT AND PRACTICE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
THE CAMEROONS.

Par. 11. Introduction.

Living and working among the Cameroonians the author was often surprised by what seemed to him, with his European background, their strange thoughts and reactions. These were so different from what he had expected them to be. Gradually, as his knowledge of the traditional life increased, he grew in understanding of it, and began to realise that their actions and reactions were the logical consequence of their Weltanschauung.

Every system of thought or belief, if it is really an integral part of the life of a people, creates its own distinctive pattern of behaviour. This is just as true of this primitive, monistic, or as H. Kraemer¹ calls it, naturalistic type of thinking, as it is so of the Christian faith. It is obvious that where the two meet, as in the Cameroons, there is impact and struggle.

It is the aim of this thesis to show and to examine, at least in part, the impact of the traditional Weltanschauung on the natives' understanding of the Christian faith and on the practice of the Church; we shall also consider the misconceptions which result therefrom. For this purpose we have found it necessary first of all to analyse fundamental biblical conceptions, in which the event of God's selfdisclosure is expressed, and their implications. Then, we sought to present a systematic view of

1) The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World;
p. 151 - 152.

native beliefs and practices as a coherent whole representing the monistic worldview. The confrontation of these two shows clearly the sources of the misconceptions which appear in the Cameroonian Church.

The points we recorded in the first part of this work can only be a representation of the conditions and facts as they appear to us as a result of observation on the spot, and of the study of books and documents in libraries and archives. As far as possible we have avoided taking any personal position as to the merit or lack of merit in these phenomena.

In the second part, in which we seek to represent the influence of native Weltanschauung on the Christian faith, it will be impossible to pose as a neutral observer because in a question of this kind there is no such thing as neutrality. From whatever standpoint we approach this question our observations and judgments are necessarily influenced by the limitations of our own position. As Christians we approach the study of Religion from the fact of God's selfdisclosure in Jesus Christ. Other Approaches each have their own postulates or bases though they are not always made explicit. The understanding of religion is bound up with the understanding of man and of self. But understanding of man and of self can only proceed from a particular faith or secular "Weltanschauung." In consequence there can be no science of religion that is not based upon some presupposition. So long as we try to make these explicit and to build upon them consciously, a scientific approach to our question is possible.

In this inquiry we consciously take as our starting point the Christian view of man, which has its bases in the kerygma of the New Testament. From this a special measure and a special method of understanding opens up. The kerygma calls all men, whatever religion they may belong to, into the Kingdom of God where there is forgiveness of Sins. Seen from this standpoint a Christian stands on the same plane as the adherent member of any other religion of "Weltanschauung." It follows also that there is no cogent reason for Christian Polemics or Apologetics in relation to non-Christian religions.

When we study such a problem as the impact of traditional Weltanschauung on the Native's understanding of the Christian Faith and the resulting misconceptions, we can only do it by studying the thought and behaviour of individuals or groups. This done we compare our observations but in putting them down into writing we have to generalize. Now it is clear that actual life is much more colourful and varied than any such generalization can ever be. This is also true regarding our or other peoples' understanding or misunderstanding of the Christian Faith. There are adults, children and babies in Christ!

Since in this part of our work we concern ourselves also with the problems of Christian ethics, we need to explain that in our view the starting-point and basis of Christian ethics is comprised in the Kerygma of the New Testament. "For the Christ-event is God's answer to the open questions of human history."¹

1) E. Stauffer: Die Theologie des Neuen Testamentes: p.83.

2) Th

There is an unparalleled demand which must be made of everyone who wishes to look into the problem of Christian ethics, that is to say, the demand that he should neglect entirely as incongruous the two questions which lead him to busy himself at all with the ethical problem: "How do I become good?" and "How do I do good?" and instead of these to ask the quite other question, the question absolutely different from them both, concerning the will of God. This demand is so trenchant because it postulates a decision as to the final reality,¹ and as such a faith-decision. Where the ethical problem really arises in the question of one's being good and of one's doing good, there already as the final truth lies the decision for the ego and the world. Therefore all ethical reflection has the end in view, that I be good, and that the world through my action may become good. However, if it is proved that these realities of the ego and the world themselves lie embedded in a completely different final reality, namely the reality of God, the Creator, Reconciler and Redeemer, then the ethical problem immediately presents itself in a completely new light. The most important thing is then not that I become good, nor that the condition of the world become improved through me, but that the reality of God prove itself everywhere to be the final reality. Therefore, that God prove himself to be the Good, with the danger

1) The following discussion of reality follow the section about the meaning of reality in D. Bonhoeffer's Ethik: p. 55 - 61.

that I and the world come to be considered not as good, but as bad through and through, becomes the origin of moral effort wherever God is believed to be the final reality. Indeed, everything appears in caricature, where it is not seen and recognised in God. Every so-called condition, every law and rule, is an abstraction, so long as God is not believed to be the final reality. But that God himself is the final reality, is, on the other hand, not an idea through which the world given to us is to be lifted up; it is not the religious refinement of a profane philosophy of life, but faith's assent to the self-witness of God.

The origin of Christian ethics is not the reality of one's own ego, not the reality of the world, not the reality of laws and values, but the reality of God revealed in Jesus Christ. That is the point of agreement which before all others, must be squarely put to anyone who wants the problem of Christian ethics to be laid before him. It sets before us the last decisive question, namely the reality according to which we shall orientate our lives; with the reality of God's Word on the one hand or with the imperfections of the world; with resurrection or with death. The question whether a man can himself reach a decision in this matter without erring, leads us to realise that God, however we ourselves decide, has already spoken His word of revelation, and that we cannot live except in the true reality of the Word of God. Thus the question concerning final reality already brings us through its answer into a situation from which we cannot free ourselves. It brings us right into the reality of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ from which it springs.

The position which we have discussed above has been succinctly defined by Dietrich Bonhoeffer¹ when he writes: "The problem of Christian Ethics is the realisation among God's creatures of the revelational reality of God in Christ."

This affirmation underlies our discussion of church problems with which subsequent chapters are concerned. In the next chapter we shall give an account of the Christian relationship between God and man on the one side and of the traditional understanding of life and community on the other side and how the latter influences the understanding of Church and Sacraments among the Cameroonian Christians. In the following chapters we shall give an account of how this impact of traditional understanding and the difficulties created by the impact of culture contact work themselves out in the understanding and practice of Christian Ethics, Home and Family Life and on the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons.

1) Ethics. p. 57.

CHAPTER 3.

God and Man.

Par. 12. The Christian Message.

As we have said that the New Testament kerygma will be the basis of this thesis, we have first to state what this kerygma is, and to give some account of the consequences which arise from its acknowledgment.

We wish to deal with the following main points.

- 1) Since the content of the message is given through the self-disclosure of God in Christ, it can only be a question of stating what it is that is to be proclaimed (κηρύγμα).
- 2) Since this message does not go out to the emptiness of space, but to men bound together by their history, we shall have to reckon both with their understanding of history and with that of the New Testament.
- 3) The message is handed on from men to men, and they are led through this message to their decision before God.

We must therefore discuss those who are addressed.

1) The kerygma (κηρύγμα)

When we speak to-day of the sending-out of the Word of God through men to men, the only expression we can use is "to preach." But even when we disregard other Greek verbs that also occur and limit this expression to the translation of κηρύττειν, then we do not find any longer in our present use of the verb "to preach"

the meaning of κηρύττειν in the New Testament. κηρύττειν does not mean to make a learned, hortatory, or edifying speech in words that are nicely put together and with an attractive voice. κηρύττειν is the proclamation of an event, it means "to proclaim" as the herald proclaims the message of his master to other men.

How important this proclaiming or preaching is to the authors of the New Testament writings, is shown by the circumstance that the verb κηρύττειν occurs much more often than the noun κήρυγμα. The great stress is not laid on κήρυγμα as though Christianity in its substance had brought something decisively new, as for instance a new teaching, a new view of God, a new form of worship, or some other thing, but it is the event, the preaching itself that is the decisive thing, for it brings to pass that for which the prophets of the Old Testament waited. Through the preaching, God's mighty breaking-in is brought to its fulfilment. It is therefore the preaching itself that is the new thing. Through the preaching comes the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, the kingdom of God.

In very close connection with the preaching of the Kingdom of God stands the summons to repentance.¹ The origin and ground of (μετάνοια) repentance is not the wickedness of man, but the nearness of the Kingdom of God. Because God is coming, and His Kingdom approaching, man must change. Repentance does not compel

1) Matthew 3, 1f; 4, 17.

the Kingdom of God to come, but it creates the possibility of taking part in the Kingdom of God. So there is no contradiction, when the disciples in one place¹ preach the coming of the Kingdom of God, and in another,² repentance. The message of the Kingdom of God is always, in addition, a preaching of repentance, and every true preaching of repentance speaks about the Kingdom of God. Repentance is preached *εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν* for forgiveness of sins.³ In the *βασιλεία* there is forgiveness of sins. The word preached is a Word of God, and, as such, an active power that also brings to pass what is preached. Therefore preaching is not a factual communication, but an event. What is proclaimed comes to pass. Forgiveness of sins means always judgment that pronounces the sinner sinful. But in this judgment the believer gets forgiveness of sin. The message of the apostles which has as its content the "Judge of quick and dead" preaches also in the same way as the prophets: "that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins."⁴ Judgment and grace are comprised in the same word. The preaching of the *εὐαγγέλιον* (Gospel) brings about separation and parting. It brings one man to deliverance and the other to judgment.

All the stories of Jesus, however edifying they may be, are

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- 1) Matthew 10,7; Luke 9, 2.
 - 2) Mark 6, 12.
 - 3) Luke 24, 47; 3, 3; Mark 1, 4.
 - 4) Acts 10, 42.

empty, they remain old stories that came to pass once upon a time, and which are more or less worthless for the present, if they are not based upon faith in the Risen One. The reality of the resurrection makes the fullness of the Christian *κήρυγμα*. This is a fact of which one cannot just take knowledge like any other historical event. It is a fact of which it must always be said that it is not a human dogma to be learned by one man from another, but Heilsgeschichte which is to be preached, and the preaching of Heilsgeschichte becomes the event of salvation. It is not the content of the preaching which is effective, but God is effective through this Word. The message does not lose its meaning, but it must be constantly preached anew, not only to the world but also to the Christian community.¹ It is *δύναμις θεοῦ* God's power.² The New Testament preaching endures no admixture.³

2. The Problem of History.

In the New Testament *κήρυγμα* is included an understanding of history which is, as we see it, one of the main keys to it. This is such an integral part of the Christian Message that the latter will be misunderstood without it. We hope to show that the Cameroonians are in constant danger of misinterpreting the fundamentals of the Christian faith because of their traditionally cyclic understanding of time and history. To make this most important point clear we shall give a sketch of these two different conceptions of

1) II Timothy 4, 2.

2) I Corinthians 1, 24.

3) Galatians 5, 11.

History and the understanding of self resulting therefrom.

3. Christian Understanding of Self.

This remarkable consciousness of history in the New Testament that expresses itself in the conception of the tertium genus, *καὶ τὸν γένος* shows us a new mankind different from Jew and Heathen. The Christians are a new historical entity that cannot be comprehended or understood in the old categories of the analysis of mankind. They are a completely new real form of community, which takes into itself, overcomes and towers above the old contradictions. With the arising of this new community of faith, we enter upon the decisive turning-point of human history.

In the New Testament we have in no wise before us this view of history stated with a scientific development of ideas, in the narrow sense. It does not confront us either as a sketch, nor in any way as a system, of the philosophy of history. It has in no way the character of an abstract science in either the ancient or the modern sense. It is neither an interpretation of political history nor of the cultural development of the peoples and of mankind. It is definitely not a view of history as a unity of development and becoming in relation to the thinking spirit, but rather is it prophecy; it is an element within the Christian message, but related to it and only understood in conjunction with it; it is the consciousness of the all-decisive turn of history. In character it consists of a communication of events that are seen to have their origin in God. This early Christian view of history is a preaching of the *kairos*

and kairos-consciousness. It is a question of a historical event in the real sense, that is understood as a revelation, as the Word of God, as the coming of God in the flesh, as filled with salvation, and bearing, and imparting it; it is a question of a decision which is resolved for all time through the life, action and death of one man; an act of God in the world, and not just in the meaning of a mystical or spiritual experience, but an event that takes place as genuine history. For this reason that kairos - a consciousness and at the same time a challenge to men to realise this history - must be definitely recognised as decisive, and men's own lives must be determined by it.

Man should take up the kairos of God in the heart, and will, and life; he should subject himself to the revelation of God in Christ and be obedient to it alone. "To turn" means to draw the conclusions from the act of God which He accomplished for men, it means to say yes to God's kairos, it means to set oneself on the way which God wishes one to go from the now of the time of decision until the end.

From the foregoing it becomes clear that his understanding and consciousness of history creates also a quite new understanding of oneself and community. This becomes the basis for the ethical decision.

4. The Understanding of Self among the Heathen.

In the first part¹ we laid down that wherever we go in the forest

1) Par. 9.2 God

area of the Cameroons, the people know of God (Loba). This God is not thought of as any kind of idol, nor is he otherwise confused with anything concrete, but he is one higher than the world, creator of earth and heaven, and the creator¹ of the child in the Mother's body. Everything that is out of the natural order of things, events that cannot be accounted for normally (for instance the birth of albinos or twins) are ascribed to him. He is further called upon as avenger in cases where no other medium is to hand. But this God, (Loba) although he is often called on, is a very colourless, undefined figure, before whom one scarcely feels real fear, whom one neither trusts nor loves. Moreover he does not interfere in the events of the tribal life, but remains a figure on the outskirts. Not he, but the ancestors, are responsible if a woman does not have a child; it is not to him but to the ancestors that sacrifices are made, because it is from them that man gets life, although he calls Loba the Creator.

The chief end of life as conceived by the natives is to get and retain the power of living. In this respect our observations fully confirm the conclusion of P. Temples² when he states: "Life with the Bantu is centred on one value only: the power of living

1) muwekedi = creator of weka = to create, produce.

2) P. Temples: La Philosophie Bantoue: p. 30 and 32. "La conception de la vie chez les Bantous. Elle est centrée sur une seule valeur: la force vitale." "La force vitale est la réalité invisible mais suprême dans l'homme. Et l'homme peut renforcer sa force vitale par la force des autres êtres de la création."

(la force vitale)" and "This power of living is the invisible but supreme reality in man. And man can reinforce his own power of living by the power inherent in other creatures." And they also confirm the observations of D. Westermann:¹ "If one asks the African after his highest good, he will answer: Life. Life for his person, for his family and his tribe. Life to the village, life to the people, life to the king, life to the delivering mothers and to the young children are the constantly returning supplications in the prayers of many West African tribes." Among the people of the Cameroons prayers for life are, with few exceptions, directed towards the spirits of the ancestors, and through sacrifices the latter are bribed by their Descendants. In this sense, curses and blessings come also from the ancestors and not from God. (The different theories as to whether this was ever different, are not relevant here. For this see W. Smith: African Ideas of God.)

We have already stated how close are the connections between the living and the dead.² From these connections an ancestor-cult has developed, in which the lineage members think above all of their own ancestors. The living family forms, with its dead members, in so far

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- 1) D. Westermann: Der Afrikaner heute und morgen: p. 213. "Fragt man den Afrikaner nach dem höchsten Gut des Menschen, so wird seine Antwort sein: Leben. Leben für seine Person, seine Familie, seinen Stamm. Leben dem Dorf, Leben allem Volk, Leben dem Könige, Leben den gebärenden Frauen und jungen Kindern sind die ständig wiederkehrenden Bitten in den Gebeten vieler westafrikanischer Stämme."
 - 2) Par. 7.2.1. The unity of the Living and the Dead.

as they are still remembered, a unity with mutual rights and duties. Seeing that the dead live on in the village of the dead, the survivors are under obligation to provide for them all that they needed in life, above all to supply them with food and drink. This duty does not endure for ever, but diminishes and gradually lapses when the dead man acquires successors in the kingdom of the dead, who stand closer to the memory of the living. On his side, the dead person, especially the erstwhile head of the family, feels even in the after-life the duty of keeping before his eyes the well-being of his relatives, provided that the latter do not neglect him. Therefore the two groups are dependent on each other; the forebears watch over their descendants, dispense advice to them in dreams and through mediums, help them in need and affliction; the latter are therefore obliged to care for them by bringing them sacrificial food and drink. The dead are dependent on the living and as they received such things only from their descendants, to die childless is everywhere considered the worst that can befall any man. On the other hand for the living, blessing, and in particular the blessing of children, comes from the ancestors. An example will make this clear.¹

"If, within a reasonable time, a woman has no hope of a child, then the reason is sought in her bad relationship with the lineage to which she has been allied. The lineage of the husband advises

1) Ittmann: Volkskundliche und Religiöse Begriffe; p. 44 - 45.

the relatives of the wife to put the matter right by musoso,¹ after the husband has propitiated the wife's kinsfolk by all sorts of gifts. The wife's lineage must now make their ancestors remove the barrenness that is threatening her. The matter is dealt with in the presence of both lineage groups. Brandy or palm wine is drunk together. The goat provided by the husband is killed amid noise and shouting, carved into two, and half handed out to each lineage group, some of the goat's blood having been collected earlier. Finally the head of the woman's lineage asks for quiet. With the nerve of a banana leaf in his hand, he goes with three or four of his kinsfolk to the grave of her ancestors, calls on the one who has died most recently, shakes some palm wine and snuff into the bung-hole of the grave, beats the grave nine times with the leaf-nerve, and at the same time he says:

1st blow: a te, kana o nangano o songo = Thou father, since thou wert laid in the grave,

2nd blow: o di mbo'asu bwam na bwam = so didst thou leave behind thee our homestead in good condition.

3rd blow: Nde kana moy'asu = but because now our son-in-law

4th blow: a tang a bola biso dipama = has behaved himself unseemly toward us,

5th blow: mo nde di poino o dolisane mo = therefore have we come to make propitiation with him.

1) musoso - discussion about atonement with a view to fruitfulness.

- 6th blow: Onola nika jasumwa ndutu yese wange = Therefore today we put away all quarrels,
- 7th blow: nde ndom'asu a nonge deme = so that our female relative may conceive hope.
- 8th blow: To nja a ben dibena onol'ao = Whoever entertains ill-will against her
- 9th blow: ekemekeme o eyidi e! - wom e! = may harm go away to the bush! - May everything disappear!

When the lineage elder comes back from the grave, he sits down in the midst of the crowd. The childless woman is placed on his right leg, so that she is looking towards the west. There is handed to him on a colocasia leaf nine grains of a mild type of *afra-momum*.¹ Some of them he takes into his mouth, chews and spits some of it into the navel of the woman and into the small of her back.² Then there is handed to him on a leaf the blood that has been caught from the goat. He dips the tips of his fingers into it and smears the two places above-named with the blood. A number of the men of consequence of the woman's lineage do the same, with the call "mese ma boi! = It is all over!" The ceremony is then finished and the community meal can begin."

We have established clearly the complete inter-dependence of all departments of life. There is originally no division between the economic, social and religious sides of life, for these too form a complete whole. Underlying all these forms and practices is a conception of time which, with Kraemer, we have defined as cyclical.

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- 1) The nine blows on the grave and the nine grains represent the nine months of gestation.
- 2) poma = a rite to spit something (dry) and to breathe at the same time.

Life springs from death, for there is no real death, and the "dead" depend on the living. We have here a conception of "eternal" life which flows like a circuit at the centre of which is the lineage and the tribe. Everything therefore centres on the continuity of this lineage and of this tribe.

This is the situation in which the men to whom the Gospel is preached find themselves. We have seen what differences exist between the Christian and the heathen understanding of self, and how closely this is dependent on the actual understanding of history. Therefore we ought not to be astonished that in the case of many Christians there is a mixture of the two. Of the working of God in the Community and in the Individual, they have, from their heathen background, hardly any understanding, because they do not know such a working of God from their own history. Therefore they can hardly imagine a "being placed before the living God," as we know it through the Old and New Testament. We do not imply that it is impossible for God to meet a man where and how he wishes and we follow W. Freitag when he writes: "Where and how the Word of God becomes articulate is not within our control. Just as the given Word is an event, so too the articulate Word is an event. There is nothing static about the word which is articulate in certain cases and this once for all. There is no ready-made prescription which we must apply for being successful. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, 'which bloweth where it listeth,' through whom it happens that the Lord opens his heart."¹

1) The articulate Word - The Problem of Communication; p. 479.f.

Many Christians look at Christianity as more powerful than heathendom, and on that account a more desirable way by which to live, and especially in which to die. The Church is conceived as analogous to the tribe, i.e. as a social institution but endowed with greater power. From part one of this thesis we know that the life of men and women in all its different stages is guided and protected by exact rules and taboos. For the well-being of the individual and of the community it is essential that these rules be followed. The Church being conceived analogous to such a community, the people apply the same rules to her. By this is meant, that, if all one's actions in life are upright - that is to say, if one is not excommunicated from the Christian community, if one goes regularly to Communion, pays one's Church dues, and, if, after one's death, the cross is placed on one's grave - then everything is in good order and the way to eternal life is sure! If they are in fact viewed in this light, baptism, communion and church discipline must have a completely different meaning from the true one.

The consequences of this misunderstanding can be seen in the native Church (Ebas'a bana b'ekombo - The Church of the children of the country) which was introduced in Bakosi by a native Church from Duala. Pastor Ese, who is a Makosi himself, writes about them:

"The main feature of their work is that they do not prevent their people from doing things that the heathens do. They are free to partake of the Lord's Supper and at the same time to be members of the secret society and to feed the ancestors on the Mabala. They have many wives and indulge in all other heathen practices such as performing the rites for their dead relatives, but at the same time

they put the cross on the grave of the dead person."

This understanding brings to maturity two completely different results, which we would like to illustrate by two examples:

1) As in the British courts, so also in the courts in the Cameroons, those who give evidence are sworn in before making their statements. Indeed the rule is to swear in Christians on the Bible, Mohammedans on the Koran and heathens on "medicine." A magistrate once explained to us that it was almost impossible in the courts in the coastal territory to ascertain whether a man was a heathen or a Christian, because people were no longer willing to swear on the heathen "medicine" and thereby to reveal themselves as people from the "bush" - or backward regions. Since the younger generation of Christians have almost all been baptised in connection with their attendance at school the inference Christianity = civilisation = progress could easily be drawn and many people could in this way come to a wrong understanding of the church where she is seen as a social institution and nothing more.

2) In this second example also, this wrong understanding of the church is the starting-point of the decision, in this instance a negative one. In a church in Bakosi-land, a missionary met about fifteen men, who had a "medicine" designed to produce fertility lying before them on the floor. In answer to the question why they had brought this piece of magic into the church, the missionary got the answer: that they had now heard the Gospel for so many years, but the Gospel had not made any improvement on the village; the number of children had continually decreased; therefore, the village

had resolved to return to the old village medicine; the Gospel had disappointed them.

5. The Roots of the New Testament Understanding of History.

The question now is: How do these men come to the New Testament comprehension of history? and this raises the larger issue of what the roots of the New Testament comprehension of history are.

1) These historical roots are actually to be sought in the Old Testament and because of their importance we must make a short statement about them.

In the Old Testament God is shown us as the Lord of history. History is the field of His action and of His revelation. As in the whole of creation, so also in history, God is the living and life-giving, the creator. History is the scope of His dominion; so He reveals Himself in the history of His chosen people, and in his covenant¹ with them. But the heathen nations too and their rulers are the instruments of His will.² With this faith in the God who acts in history and who reveals Himself through history, the Old Testament has created the basis for the New Testament view of history. For without God, who is the Lord of history, because he creates and guides it, the early Christian kairos-thought could not be brought to perfection. Only the God who is Lord of time can prepare the kairos for His saving act, and bring His Kingdom to its final

1) Deuteronomy 1, 30f; Psalm 100, 3.

2) Isaiah 10, 5f; Jeremiah 25, 8f; 27, 5f; Isaiah 41, 4; 44, 24-45, 13.

conclusion in history. God, the Lord of history, is the one who, in history, fights against the disobedience and unbelief of mankind, even of His chosen people, and is at the same time the God who conquers on His judgment-day.

2) History is, in the Old Testament, a dialogue between God and his people, between God and the peoples of the world, the history of God with people and peoples, God's dealing with them and towards them. History is call, and counter-call, question and answer, whether yes or no. Man, people and nations are here neither mere dead tools whom God manipulates, nor equal partners, who stand on the same level with God; they are His creation. Yet He vouchsafes them His message, His demand, His help, and His salvation. He calls them to submit to Him and empowers them at the same time to act for themselves through His instructions. Obedience and disobedience, faith and unbelief, uprightness and wickedness, are men's answers to God's actions and word. God demands decision of man, and at the same time enables him to make such free choice, gives him the dignity of being man, calls him to community with Himself, the Creator and Lord of history.

3) History is, for the faithful in the Old Testament, movement towards a goal. That which God promises and proclaims, will, and must, come to fulfilment.¹ His word, His revelation, is a deed, an event in history. All earthly time is time apportioned

1) Isaiah 46, 9 - 11.

by God.¹ When it is run out, there comes the יוֹם יְהוָה = day of God,² the day of the great reckoning, of judgment, when God through His power leads all to His goal.³ History is here understood from the point of view of an action of God in the future which will bring everything to a conclusion.

4) To the basic thoughts of the Old Testament view of history, also belongs the close connection of this view of history with the belief in creation, as is apparent, for example, from the complex of stories in Genesis embracing the creation to the patriarchs, this combination involves no contradiction to the eschatological telos-thought, which we stated in point 3. For the conception of creation is, even in the Old Testament itself, inherently eschatologically conditioned, as the beginning of God's actions that draws to its own fulfilment, and carries with it the guarantee of this fulfilment.

The question of the origin is in the last resort identical with the question of the end, (τέλος). Because God is the Lord, He is the creator, and fulfiller. Creation is the beginning of the history of God's people right up to their final goal, which will at the same time be the final goal of the world. The

1) Isaiah 60, 22; 49, 8; Jeremiah 51, 6; 33, 20; Genesis 8, 22.

2) G. Dellings: ἡμέρα

3) Amos 5, 18 - 20.

God of Israel is the Creator and the Lord of History is at the same time the Lord of nature.¹

The New Testament has brought forward no new understanding of history, but it has dealt really seriously with Old Testament historical understanding. In this connection we say with E. Brunner.²

"We do not have Jesus Christ without the Old Testament. Therefore just as the Church cannot be the Church without Jesus Christ, so also she cannot be what she is without the Old Testament."

The ἐκκλησία τοῦ = Church of God³ of the new covenant cannot be understood without the $\overline{\pi\iota\tau\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma}$ $\overline{\eta\gamma\alpha\gamma\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha}$ = community of the old covenant.⁴ The Christian, even the Christian of the Cameroons, can understand himself and his position only in this continuity.

It has now indeed become clear how important is the preaching of the Old Testament message to heathens and Christians. In fact every divorce of Old and New Testament is an inadequate artifice. For only from the whole message, does the kairos, so important for us, become reality. In theological refresher courses with Pastors and Catechists we tried to point this out on the basis of the stories of creation in Genesis 1 and 2. We further tried to work out the Heathen understanding of life (eternal life!) and

1) W. Foerster: $\overline{\kappa\tau\iota\zeta\omega}$, $\overline{\kappa\tau\iota\varsigma}$, $\overline{\kappa\tau\iota\sigma\mu\alpha}$.

2) Die Unentbehrlichkeit des Alten Testaments für die missionisierende Kirche; p. 5 - 6.
"Wir haben Jesus Christus nicht ohne das Alte Testament. Darum: so gewiss als die Kirche nicht Kirche sein kann ohne Jesus Christus, so gewiss kann sie nicht Kirche sein ohne das Alte Testament."

3) K. L. Schmidt: $\overline{\epsilon\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\alpha}$

4) Philippians 3, 3; Romans 9, 6f; James 1, 1.

to compare it with the Christian understanding. It was interesting to see the reactions of some old Catechists and Pastors who understood the problem at once. They started to see this contrariness everywhere. We think that if the Christian Message is to be fully understood in those terms described above, it will have to be confronted not only with what are considered by Christians as Pagan abuses on moral grounds, but with the whole philosophical system underlaying the Heathen understanding of self. But to enable the Christian preacher to do this, he must first of all know what this heathen understanding of self is!

Par. 13. The Sacraments.

1. Baptism.

Baptism is the sacrament of the once-and-for-all work of the Holy Spirit. There He brings to bear on the believer the death and resurrection of Christ and sets him, a dead-and-raised being, within the new creation, a man possessed by, and possessing, $\pi \nu \epsilon \tilde{\upsilon} \mu \alpha$ = the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit sets him within the tertium genus = $\kappa \alpha \tau \acute{\alpha} \nu \mu \epsilon \rho \acute{o} \varsigma$, giving him not only a new future, but also a new history, for in being made a member of God's Israel he learns that the story of the Old Testament is his story.

In Baptism the Holy Spirit does this work. Yet we must leave room for the fact that because He is God He is free either to do it or not to do it. Faith will assure us that He will do it; Faith in Him as verily God will also refuse to deny Him freedom not to do so. We shall have to return to this later in this paragraph.

We consider W. Ringwald¹ is correct, from the point of view of the Christian message, when he says that for the heathen baptism is

- a) the apprehension through Christ and the translation into His sphere of power.
- b) the turning-point of life, because it is the decision for Christ.
- c) the reception into a new community. The man baptised becomes a member of the body of Christ.

We wish now to find out how the Cameroons Christian may understand or misunderstand his baptism. In this connection also it is true that the Spirit of God bloweth where it listeth, and that this understanding or alternately, misunderstanding, can vary from man to man. There can be no question of judgment over these Christians, but rather of a representation of the difficulties.

Concerning Baptism writes P.W. Böhmann²

"Christian baptism, as death and resurrection in Christ may be understood by the Bantu according to their traditional

- 1) Die Religion der Akanstämme und das Problem ihrer Bekehrung; p. 212; 217; 219.
 - 2) "Die christliche Taufe als Sterben und Auferstehen in Christus gibt manchen Wunschträumen der Bantuneger tatsächlichen Untergrund und Inhalt. Wird doch bei ihren Initiationsriten das Sterben und Wiedergeborenwerden zu neuem Leben erhofft und durch Zeremonien aller Art versinnbildet, durch Absonderung von der Gemeinschaft, durch simulierte oder mit Betäubungsmitteln verursachte Bewusstlosigkeit, durch Begrabenwerden, durch einen neuen Namen, neue Kleider usw."
- Die Christliche Terminologie als Missionsmethodisches Problem; p. 324.

ideas, as with their rites of initiation they pass through death to a new life which is symbolized in all sorts of ceremonies, e.g. through isolation from the community for some time; or by pretending to become unconscious; or by becoming unconscious through taking narcotics; or through burial; or by assuming a new name; or by wearing new clothes, etc."

We pointed¹ out that in the Cameroons there exists a similar heathen back-ground. Christian terminology also, in part originates from this department of life:

An uninitiated person, that is, a person who has not yet undergone the rites of initiation was called by the heathen a nu si bi = one who knows not. In the translation of the Bible, this expression was used to translate $\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ = basibi = nations² or $\epsilon\upsilon\theta\epsilon\tau\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ = ka nusibi = as the Gentile.^{3,4} Thus a baptised person is an initiated person, a person with knowledge. All participants in a course of initiation were included in one age-set, called mwemba (pl. myemba). This term mwemba was used to translate $\epsilon\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ = mwemba = church in the New Testament,⁵ and קָהָל = mwemba = congregation in Old Testament usage.^{6,7}

1) Par. 8, 3, Initiation.

2) For instance Romans 1, 5.

3) " " Matthew, 18, 17.

4) In the same way ἔθνη = nations was translated by basibi (Isaiah 8, 23.)

5) For instance Matthew 16, 18.

6) " " Psalm 35, 18.

7) On this see also Par. 14. The Duala language as a means of communication.

Those who passed through the initiation class took new names as a sign of their new existence. Today, too, many Christians at the age of 16 - 20 suddenly change their names - certainly a relic of these old heathen conceptions. The custom of giving a Christian name to those baptised in their maturity, seeing that they become through baptism a bewekedi ba pena = new creature,¹ has, against this background a double meaning.

We stated that the Cameroons Christian is always in danger on account of his heathen understanding of history and existence, of misunderstanding the nature of the church of which he becomes a member through baptism. Baptism becomes the action, through which the entry into the new community is accomplished. Baptism as an action is seen as efficacious in itself, (do ut des) wherein, naturally, God's freedom is queried.

An old Pastor told me that at the beginning of missionary work many people came to Church and were baptised. They believed that through baptism they became new "creatures" who were holy (basangedi) and that as they had received a new life, they would never die away from this earth if they followed the laws of the Church. As soon as the first Christian died the great majority left the Church saying: "ngea ne nde mene esele biso di bupe nge'asu na kwan!" - There is only one way, let us therefore follow our old way! In the same direction also goes the statement of one informant on the question of why so many Christians are turning back to polygamy. He says: "When Christianity came

1) 2. Corinthians 5, 17.

with the Christian law that a Christian should have but a wife many people blindly became members with the hope to see the coming of the Lord as soon as possible. As they have waited for many years and the Lord does not come according to their expectation they change their minds and become polygamists for it seems they are wasting their time instead of enjoying the facilities that the non-Christians are enjoying."

After his acceptance into the community, the Christian has to take precautions to remain in the community. This he does indeed by not coming under church discipline, by attending communion as regularly as possible, by paying his church dues. The legalism that arises out of this situation, will concern us again later. That what we have cited is not the author's own construction of the facts will be shown by some examples.

F. Lutz¹ writes as follows about the natives' custom of putting their Baptismal certificates and their church-tax cards in the grave with the dead: "This custom seems to have begun during the war (1914 - 1918) and may like so many other things be traced back to dreams. As a result of my investigation I found that it was said of many that before they died they had the following dream. After leaving their bodies and this earth behind

1) Annual Report, 1929.

"Auch diese Sache scheint ihren Anfang während des Krieges (1914 - 1918) genommen zu haben und wie so manches andere auf Träume zurückzuführen zu sein. Beim Nachforschen konnte ich feststellen, dass von manchen erzählt wird, es habe ihnen vor dem Sterben geträumt, sie haben diese Erde und diesen Leib verlassen müssen,

they came to the gates of Heaven. But the gates were not opened to them because they were not able to produce their certificate of baptism and a receipt showing that they paid their Church Contribution. Of one of our Christians, who is still alive, it is said, that he died and that everybody thought him dead, but he came back to life and insisted on paying his contribution and receiving his membership card with the payment entered down in order to be ready, should death come again, and to avoid being refused again at the gates of heaven."

aber als sie an die Himmelstüre gekommen seien, habe man ihnen nicht aufgetan, weil sie keine Bescheinigung ihrer Taufe und keinen Nachweis über die Bezahlung ihrer Kirchensteuer gehabt haben. Von einem unserer Christen, der heute noch lebe (in Kumba Division), wird erzählt, er sei schon gestorben gewesen und von allen für tot gehalten worden, dann auf einmal sei er wieder aufgewacht (auferstanden) und habe dringend begehrt, seine Kirchensteuer zu bezahlen und seine Kirchensteuerkarte mit einem dem entsprechenden Vermerk zu bekommen, damit, wenn der Tod nochmals komme, er gerüstet sei und nicht nochmals abgewiesen werde beim Eingang in den Himmel."

In the same report we find:

"of one woman it is said that before she died she had great qualms of conscience because she owed one shilling of her contribution. Only after someone had paid this shilling for her and the card with this new entry had been handed over to her did she quieten down."

It often happens¹ that the deceased's kinsfolk pay the outstanding church taxes on behalf of a dead Christian. Sometimes the heathen pay for dead Christian relatives.

The man who applies for baptism² "has received his impulse towards this decision through the preached Word of God, through his experience of the impotence of the ancestral spirits to meet his bodily or material needs, or through his longing to escape from the fear of witchcraft, or through some similar experience."

"Von einer Frau wird erzählt, sie sei vor dem Sterben in grosse Not gekommen, weil sie noch einen Shilling Kirchensteuer schuldig gewesen sei. Erst als man diesen für sie bezahlt und ihr die Karte, die als Quittung für die entrichtete Steuer dient, gegeben habe, sei sie ruhig geworden."

1) W. Keller: Tertialbericht 1954.

2) W. Ringwald: Die Religion der Akanstämme; p. 212.

The might of the living God has become known to him, so that he now knows something of the truth: "God is the Lord." "This knowledge does not place him in a new world, and above all it does not give him any new view of the world in the modern scientific sense."¹ The idea of R. Allier² is therefore not correct when he writes: "In this conversion the idea of a living and loving God, bent over his children to help them, replaces the idea of fetishes the power of which, as long as people believed in them, was known to be malicious and bad, but which now seems to be a mere nothing. Not only their malice but the very existence of any power in fetishes is denied and no longer believed in."

That Allier is not alone in this view, but that all European missionaries are tempted to think as he does, is understandable. But it is a destructive opinion for in denying the existence of these powers, which for the Africans are very real, they omit to take account of one of the Africans' chief concerns, a concern that has existential meaning especially for the one to be christened. E.A. Asamoah,³ a Gold Coast minister writes concerning it:

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- 1) W.V. Stone: The Dark Ages and Twentieth Century Africa.
 - 2) La Psychologie de la Conversion; p. 273, vol. II.
 "Dans cette conversion, L'idée d'un Dieu vivant, aimant, penché sur ses enfants pour les secourir, se substitue à l'idée des fétiches dont le pouvoir, quand on y croyait, était redouté comme malicieux et méchant, mais qui maintenant ne paraissent plus que pur néant. C'est l'existence même de leur pouvoir, et non pas seulement de leur malice, qui est niée et à la quelle on ne croit plus."
 - 3) The Christian Church and African Heritage; p. 300.

"..... A second suggestion, which is closely tied up with the first, is that the religious beliefs and practices of African communities, such as these described above, should make us take the world of spirits seriously. Without making any judgment as to whether it is good for Africans to worship nature-spirits or to have communion with ancestral spirits, we should be able to acknowledge that the spiritual world in which the African believes is a reality. Africans raise the challenge that beyond visible nature - the nature of natural science - there are invisible beings who are closely associated with men and who can influence them for good or evil.

Thirdly, having recognised the reality of the world of spirits, the practical step is to show the African Christian that real power is not in the hands of these spirits, but in the hands of Jesus Christ. The important thing is not that *Tigare* does not exist, but that the power of Christ is far greater than *Tigare*. It would be unrealistic to tell the African Christian that there is no witchcraft, or that it is the creation of man's mind: the positive and constructive fact is that witchcraft is real, but that Christ has come to save men also from witchcraft."

Another example may help to show how real the traditional view of nature still is for the Christians. One day we discussed the problems of suffering and illness with a few Church elders. Now we know that the Cameroonians attribute all illnesses, whatever their nature, to witchcraft and sorcery. This does not mean, that they entirely disregard secondary causes but, in so far as

they recognise these, they generally think of them as working in association with witchcraft and magic. This belief may be found among many African tribes.¹ This does not mean that their reference of illness to "supernatural" causes leads them to neglect treatment of symptoms. On the contrary, they know hundreds of plants which may be used to treat diseases and lesions and in minor cases they trust to drugs to cure their ailments. Particularly old women are much respected because of their great knowledge of cures for minor ailments. They only take steps to remove the primary and supernatural causes when the illness is of a serious nature or takes an alarming turn. Every medical practitioner can tell how patients are often removed from hospital, even without consulting the doctor, if his relatives find that the cause of his illness is due to witchcraft or sorcery which they think stronger than the "white man's medicine" dispensed in hospital. After having made all these points clear to these Church elders, I asked them what a Christian's view point on this matter was to be. They said that they could still not see any other source for an illness than witchcraft or sorcery. As Christians they would not go and put any man's name to the oracle but would leave everything to God's judgment.

In the primitive church, men knew about these powers, and believed that God had overcome² them in Jesus Christ. This belief was bound up with the receiving of the Holy Ghost and with baptism.

1) cf. E.E. Evans - Pritchard; Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande p. 479 bis.

2) A. von Harnack: Dogmengeschichte; p. 19.

Education will in time change the African's view and understanding of nature, but secular natural science alone cannot give him a cosmology in which life really becomes meaningful. A middle aged higher elementary teacher who was married for several years and whose wife was barren told me once: "I have sent my wife to many hospitals but no doctor could help her. My own and my wife's parents want me to make musoso (expiation discussion) because the senior brother of my father-in-law was against this marriage and he died shortly after our union. Being a Christian I have resisted this temptation, but it is only now that I am beginning to understand that there can be a physical reason for the barrenness of a woman, as the doctors have told me." This gives him the physical explanation but it is only through faith that he will be able to accept this and to see it as the will of the creator. Faith is essential for our growing into Christ. It is our response to or 'closing with' His Grace, wherein He was incarnate, crucified, and risen for us, and which is offered to us in the Sacrament of Baptism. Rather is it our response to the general baptism which Christ underwent for us, and to our own Baptism wherein He has laid His hand on our head and said to us: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine."¹

2. The Lord's Supper.

We have in Baptism a once-and-for-all sacrament. But Christ

1) Isaiah 43, 1.

also gave us a repetitive sacrament. In the Lord's Supper the Holy Spirit repeats in us the redeeming work of the death and resurrection of Christ. The Holy Spirit makes the death and resurrection of Christ 1900 years ago contemporary for us.

In the section about "medicine" we pointed out how, for the natives of the Cameroons, the symbols connected with the presentation of these powers of intervention can be of great significance. They do not differentiate between the sign and the thing denoted, between appearance and existence. In the same way they do not differentiate between the secret society member who wears an animal's mask, and the mask; he is an animal, in the same way as the boys, who, in the course of initiation, smeared themselves with white earth, were spirits. It is clear that because of this way of thinking, a correct understanding of the sacraments in general and of communion in particular, is made very difficult.

The bones of a tortoise = a tortoise.

Animal mask + man = animal.

Man + white earth = ghost.

Bread = the body of Christ

Wine = the blood of Christ

It is significant that it is much easier for the Roman Catholic theologians to deal with this manner of thinking and conceiving, than it is for us, because the Roman sacrifice of the mass is itself founded on similar conceptions. But let us rather leave two Roman colleagues to speak themselves, and we will be

surprised at the analogy.¹

"Nobody will deny the similarity between our sacraments and those signs of protective magic and medicines which, one hopes, work through their natural symbolism (materia)² and through the manipulations and words of the magician (forma), without any help from those interested in the result (ex opere operato). This similarity is of course only an external one and no honest critic will be deceived by the fundamental differences. These magic rites all point towards our material requirements, whereas the seven sacraments only use the analogy of natural life to illustrate birth,

- 1) "Solchen Zeichen, solchen Schutz - und Heilmitteln, die schon durch ihre natürliche Symbolik die erhoffte Wirkung versinnbildern (materia) und durch die Manipulationen und Worte des Zauberers (forma) die Wirkung unfehlbar, ohne weiteres Zutun des Interessierten (ex opere operato) erreichen, wird niemand die Ähnlichkeit mit unsern Sakramenten absprechen. Diese Ähnlichkeit liegt allerdings nur im Aeussern und kann keinen ehrlichen Beurteiler über die grundlegenden Unterschiede hinwegtäuschen. Die magischen Riten sind ganz diesseitsbezogen und auf materielle Bedürfnisse gerichtet, während die Siebenzahl der Sakramente nur die Analogie des natürlichen Lebens verwednet, um Geburt, Wachstum und Heilung des übernatürlichen Lebens und Leitung und Erhaltung der übernatürlichen Gemeinschaft zu veranschaulichen. Bei den magischen Riten existiert die unfehlbare Wirksamkeit meist nur in der unerschütterlichen, weil unkritischen Ueberzeugung der armen Getäuschten, während die Sakramente im beglückten Menschen tatsächlich Wirkungen hervorbringen, die den Himmel in Erstaunen setzen. Dieser Unterschied erklärt sich daraus, dass die Magie mit unpersönlichen Kräften rechnet, die gar nicht oder nicht in der vermeinten Art und Weise vorhanden sind, während die Sakramente ihre Wirkkraft von Gott selber haben und nur deshalb gnadenbewirkende Zeichen sind, weil Christus sie eingesetzt hat.
- 2) Thomas Aquinas denoted the "res visibiles" of the sacrament as the "materia," the "verba" as the "forma."
K. Heussi: Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte; p. 236.

growth and healing of the supernatural life, and guidance and preservation of the supernatural community. The unfailing efficacy of the magic rites mostly exists only in the uncritical but unshakeable conviction of these poor deceived folk; whereas the sacraments operate in the blessed man in a real and most astonishing way (während die Sakramente im beglückten Menschen tatsächlich Wirkungen hervorbringen, die den Himmel in Erstaunen setzen). The difference between the two is, that the magic rites reckon with impersonal powers (mit unpersönlichen Kräften) which do not exist at all or which do not exist in the way they are supposed to. On the other hand, the sacraments receive their efficacy from God himself and are gracious signs (gnadenbewirkende Zeichen) only because Christ instituted them"¹

"What the Catholic Church teaches regarding the revealed realities of grace (réalités révélées de la grace), in particular that it is a supernatural reinforcement of the being, and that it may grow and be strengthened in itself (et qu'elle peut croître et se fortifier en soi), is similar to what the Bantu believe in their order of existence (ordre ontologique) for all beings and powers."²

1) P.W. Bühlmann: Die Christliche Terminologie; p. 321-322.

2) P. Tempels: La Philosophie Bantoue: p. 39.
Ce que la théologie catholique enseigne quant aux réalités révélées de la grace, notamment qu'elle est un renforcement surnaturel de l'être, et qu'elle peut croître et se fortifier en soi, ressemble à ce que les Bantous admettent dans l'ordre ontologique pour tout être, pour toute force".

a) "Das Abendmahl wirkt, für die Kameruner, magisch, wie ein Zaubermittel.

Let us now set against these extracts from statements of Roman Catholic Scholars, three reports from missionaries in the Cameroons (these reports can be added to at will);

a) "The Lord's Supper, for the Cameroonians, works in the same way as their magic rites.

1. The Christians do not understand the Lord's Supper.
2. There is so much paganism in our congregations that it becomes difficult to hold communion services with a clear conscience.
3. That the christians connect the Lord's Supper with the performance of good works."

b) Concerning Baptism and the Lord's Supper we have again and again to bring the Christians back to the truth of the Gospel. Most of them are of the opinion that nothing evil can happen to one who is baptised and receives the Lord's Supper. Both are therefore in great demand."

c) "They ascribe to the Lord's Supper a magic power which works like a "medicine." What is promised in the sacrament they would like

a) "Das Abendmahl wirkt, für die Kameruner, magisch, wie ein Zaubermittel.

1. Die Christen verstehen dieses Mahl nicht recht.
2. Es sei soviel heidnisches Wesen in unsern Gemeinden, dass man das Abendmahl nicht mit gutem Gewissen geben könne.
3. Es habe sich bei den Christen der Gedanke irgendwelcher Leistung mit dem Abendmahl verbunden."

F. Lutz: Annual Report 1929.

b) "In Bezug auf Taufe und Abendmahl haben wir die Christen immer wieder auf die evangelische Wahrheit zurückzubringen. Die Ansicht der Meisten ist; wer getauft ist und das Abendmahl empfängt, bei dem kann es nicht fehlen. Das Verlangen nach beiden ist darum gross."

to see with their eyes and touch with their hands, Further many Christians believe that good works must be performed in order to receive the sacrament. Even if not everyone thinks that the Lord's Supper or better still the forgiveness of their sins, promised in the sacrament, can be bought, the thought is very deeply rooted in them that whoever has paid his church contribution must be admitted to the Lord's Table! Where this view is held it is naturally not far removed from the other view that the Lord's Supper, equivalent to forgiveness of sins, can be bought with money."¹

If we compare these three statements with the already quoted statements of Roman Catholic belief, a partial agreement at least seems to be established. In the missionaries' discussions and reports, the unfortunate amalgamation of communion and church dues is constantly made responsible for this situation, since many Christians pay their church dues only under the threat of not being

H. Wildi: Annual Report 1930.

- c) "Es wird dem Abendmahl eine magische Kraft zugeschrieben, die ähnlich einem Zaubermittel wirke. Man möchte, was in dem Sakrament zugesagt ist, gleichsam mit den Augen sehen, ja mit Händen greifen. Weiter ist nicht von der Hand zu weisen, dass sich bei unsern Christen sehr der Gedanke festgesetzt hat, dass mit dem Sakrament eine Leistung verbunden ist. Wenn auch die Meinung weniger vorhanden ist, als ob man das Abendmahl, beziehungsweise die in dem Sakrament gewährte Vergebung der Sünden erkaufen könne, so ist doch der Gedanke in Ihnen festgewurzelt, dass wer seinen Verpflichtungen in der Entrichtung der Kirchensteuer einigermaßen nachkommt, auch zum Abendmahl zugelassen werden muss! Wo diese Meinung herrscht, da ist es natürlich nicht mehr weit zu der Vorstellung; das Abendmahl - Sündenvergebung könne durch Geld erkauft werden."

1) J. Erne: Annual Report 1934.

allowed to go to Communion.

But it seems to us that this circumstance is insufficient to explain the magical understanding of baptism and above all of communion. We think the source of the Cameroonians' understanding of history and of self is at the root of the problem. The sacrament is for them a power and "strength" that automatically holds one in the unity - harmony of the church. Therefore if a man has taken communion, nothing can tear him from the church's sphere of influence. As an extreme example of this attitude we may instance what frequently happens when a Christian man who falls into polygamy is refused at the Lord's Table. He will continue to do his best as a member of his congregation, but above all he will see that his wives regularly partake in the Lord's Supper because he believes that he is partaking in the holy meal through his wives!

How far the sacrament is understood to be a power working in the traditional way of a "medicine," may be seen from the following statement of a Cameroonian Pastor: "Many people believe that the communion elements give a man additional power as a filled man (mulondedi.) If you have already two spirits (powers) in your body (not' a bedi bebe - man with two spirits) then bread and wine, which are the truth of God, will kill you. If someone is known to have already two bedi but still takes communion he is said to have a cup in his throat into which bread and wine are collected so that they may not go down into his belly and kill him ("oten be belongisan ba da la Sango be masueano esibe po o was'ao na dibum")

there these Communion Elements end without going down into his belly)."

The Protestant belief that there is only one means of grace, namely the Word of God, which we come upon at one time in preaching and at another time in the fixed form of the sacraments, has not been taken for granted here. An example may indicate the sort of difficulty that can arise. Because of the lack of pastors (ordained men) the right has been delegated to some evangelists (unordained men) to administer communion, but not to baptise. If, today the theologically meaningless question is put to the church members, which of the two sacraments, baptism or communion, is "stronger," in many places one gets the answer that baptism is the stronger sacrament, because it can be administered only by the ordained pastor.

3. Appendix.

In this appendix we propose to treat of two phenomena that have sacramental character for many of the Christians in the Cameroons.

a) Celebrations in memory of the dead.

We have seen that among the heathen there are two distinct funeral rites. The first usually taking place between the third and fifth day after death, and the second on the ninth day (dibua dindene). The second ceremony may be postponed to an even later date. Today this gathering often takes place one year after death. By praising the deceased, they are supposed to help him to a corresponding position in the next world to that which he occupied in this world.

The Christians like the heathen, hold for the most part a day of remembrance three days after the burial. The Christian celebration for the dead at this time often differs hardly at all from the heathen festival of remembrance (sasa kwedi). Many Christians still offer sacrifice on this day to the ancestors. The second festival of remembrance (dibua dindene) is called "Waking" by the Christians.¹ This custom can be traced over the greater part of the West Coast. The following is a description of such a festival of remembrance:²

"In the evening, about eight o'clock, people meet in the house of the deceased for this remembrance ceremony. Not only the relatives and friends are invited, but also the choirs of the Church and if possible, the catechist and the pastor of the congregation. Up to about one in the morning the choirs sing their hymns. After this eating and drinking start and continue till dawn, and in between there is further singing of hymns and reading of passages out of the Bible by the catechist. Favoured texts are Psalms one and twenty-three. At dawn, about 5.30 the meeting breaks up - many of the participants are drunk - and people go out to the grave where a wooden cross is set. Another hymn is sung and the

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- 1) The wake: "A formal announcement of the death and an invitation for the kindred and others whom it may concern to come and perform the funeral rites, are given by messenger or by drum, or at the present day in many communities in low civilisation, by firing guns. During the interval between the toilet of the corpse and its final disposal it is watched - a ceremony known in this country as the wake, because it involves one or more all-night sittings."

Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics; Vol. 4 p. 418.

- 2) W. Keller in; Der Heidenbote; Heft 2/3 1955.

Lord's Prayer said. After this the choirs return to the house of the deceased where each of them receives from the man responsible (sango a kwedi) a gift of about ten shillings."

This setting of the Cross is a custom known in other parts of West Africa also. It is believed by many of the Christians that by setting the cross on the grave hill the deceased will ascend into heaven in analogy to the ascension of Jesus Christ.

Just as for the heathen the entrance into the village of the dead is opened to the deceased by the celebrations in their memory, in the same way the Christians seem to believe they can help the dead towards the resurrection through the setting up of the cross on the grave. Thus, through baptism, communion, and setting up of the cross, the way of the Christian is guaranteed, since all three work "ex opere operato."

The next two pages show two modern invitations to remember the death of a person; the first a Heathen and the second a Christian one. Both refer to a commemoration exactly one year after death.

The first is an exact copy of the invitation which hung at the entrance door of our station at Besongabang / Mamfe.

The second invitation was sent to all the congregations in the Kumba Presbytery by the deceased's son.

NOTICE

DANCE OR WHAT:

DANCE

FRIENDS, BANYANGIES, EJAGHAMS, COUNTRYMEN.

THERE WILL BE A GRAND BALL ROOM DANCE AT BESENGE
QUARTERS, BESONGABANG, ON THE 27TH INSTANT. THE PURPORT
OF THE DANCE IS TO KEEP IN MEMORIA THE LATE MRS. POLINAH
BESONG BETEK WHO WAS RELIEVED OF THE WORLD'S BURDENS
ON NOVEMBER 26TH, 1953.

MUSIC	-	BESONGABANG FAMOUS BAND.
DOORS OPEN	-	8 P.M.
ADMISSION	-	FREE

J. A. BETEK

ORGANISER.

BESONGABANG, 21st November, 1954.

MEMORIAM SERVICE TO BE HELD ON 7th SEPT. 1958,
IN ALL CHURCHES IN KUMBA PRESBYTERIAN DISTRICT
IN HONOUR OF

LATE

PASTOR

XYZ

WHO DIED ON SUNDAY 8th SEPTEMBER, 1957.

All members of my family and I are appealing to you members of all Presbyterian Churches in Kumba Parish, to remember our LATE PASTOR XYZ in your prayers and sermons on Sunday 7th September, 1958, in your respective churches.

To mark it as a special sermon, I will refer you to read Revelation 14, 13. (Which reads thus):-

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

Yours brotherly in Christ.

WXYZ

FOOT NOTE: As this is still rainy season, I intend to put up his cross in later part of October, 1958, or in early part of November, 1958. I shall inform you early enough before that time as to enable you to make chance to attend.

b) Ordination.

Often Ordination of a Pastor is also understood as being a sacrament working in the way we have discussed. "Special Power" is believed to be passed to him in this ceremony which then becomes the basis of his authority.

The pastor has, with both Christians and Heathen, a special place in the community into which he comes through his ordination. Just as the lineage head (mutudu) offers the sacrifice to the ancestors and is also in other ways an authority for many kinds of decisions, so, within the Christian Community the pastor occupies this special position. This expresses itself in different ways:

It was told us that pastors may demand a higher price for their daughters when given in marriage just like chiefs. In most disputes the pastors insist on the correctness of their opinion in all respects. A circumstance which, especially in the case of the older, badly educated pastors can lead to difficult controversial situations with young, much better educated teachers or officials, and in which the pastor by appealing to the "Special Power," conferred upon him by ordination, often succeeds in winning the day. Especially among the older generation the origin of the pastor as well may be of great importance for his authority. The record¹ of a dispute between two pastors which took place in 1908 is an excellent example of a problem evolving from this kind of thinking. One Pastor obviously queried the authority of the other because he was only a son of Hagar (half free!) whereas he himself

1) K. Stolz: Akten Kamerun 1908.

was a son of Sarah (a free born!)

This Problem of the pastor behaving as the "Chief" of "his" Christians is even more complex as it has another root also which comes from the person of the missionary. The missionary in Africa was and still is considered by the Africans as being a member of the ruling nation; even if he is of different nationality. By this he naturally took up the place of a "chief" and the church grew around him. In his time the African pastor became his subordinate (read sub-chief!), the catechist became the underling of the pastor and at the bottom of this pyramid we find the church elders and finally the simple church members. This understanding of the relationship between the various ministries colours of course their working together. The pastoral office as regards the cure of souls and the ministerial office of the pastor towards the ministry of the laity are widely misunderstood or not practised. During a course¹ where this subject was discussed in a group of African pastors and laymen and European missionaries, we realised an astonishing similarity concerning these problems all over Africa.

In the following we render the curriculum vitae of a few Cameroonian Pastors, written by themselves. They provide us with a good insight into their problems and religious experiences and in their understanding of themselves as Christians and as Pastors. It may be interesting to note, that those who wrote in Duala expressed themselves much more clearly than those writing in English.

1) Course for Missionaries and Pastors on Rapid Social Change and the Mission of the Church: held at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, July, 1959.

Name	Abraham Ebong Ngole		
Hometown	Nyandong		
Tribe	Bakosi		
Born	1899		
Schools	Vernacular School	Nyandong	1911-13
	Knabenschule	Nyasoso	1914
	Primary School	Nyasoso	1917-18
		Victoria	1919-21
Career	Storekeeper (Plantation)		1922-23
	Catechist and Teacher		1924-36
	Evangelist		1937-46
	Pastor		1947-

(Translation from Duala)

The Grace of God overcomes a mountain.

Somebody who knows the life of my ancestors and their aim with me must be astonished to see me today as a Christian and as a preacher.

I am the offspring of a particularly strong heathen family and I was the first child of it. Their aim was that I should inherit all their Losango. To this end my father began early to buy me into some losango of particular strength. But the Lord God used my father as a tool to bring me to school, which he had refused before. And from that time our division begun.

In 1918 something happened in my life which I did not want my father to know. But he heard about it through a friend of mine. We were baptised. When my father heard about this change he saw no other way out of this situation than to marry me to two women at once. When I and my friend heard about this we left our house at night, without telling anybody, to go down to Victoria where I entered the Government School at the beginning of 1919. My father followed me right down to Victoria with his advice to change my mind. But he gave it up at the time Rev. Modi Din¹ called me to become a

1) Modi Din was one of the first Pastors to be ordained; he continued the work when the missionaries had to leave the country in 1915 because of the war.

Vernacular Teacher and a Catechist.

The temptation that followed was that my salary was so low in those days. Before I had been a Storekeeper with a good salary. I felt we were hanging in the air, I had not appreciated before what it meant to receive one's salary every month. In 1927, when I got married, I almost felt that I could not carry on with my work. Moreover I received letters from friends calling me to better jobs. But I could not leave my work. What Rev. Modi and Rev. Baertschi told me was stronger than the letters about a good monthly salary. These temptations were small compared with those that followed when our family grew. What helped me then and helps me up to this day is the word of the Apostle Paul in Galatians 2. 20-21: "I have been crucified with Christ; It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the Grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose."

But there were other temptations in my life and in my work also. Even when I became a Pastor many things followed me that were a heavy load on my shoulders. I had to bear illnesses, and slander which came from friends and co-workers. But above all this I always heard the call: "Follow me." (Math. 9. 9.)

The Grace of God, which saved me from the aims of my fathers, alone made me to be what I am now.¹

1) Rev. A. Ngole is now the chairman of the General Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons.

Name	Paul Nso		
Hometown	Folepi		
Tribe	Mundani		
Schools	Vernacular	Folepi	1929-30
	Primary	Besongabang	1931-36
	Catechist Training Centre		1937-39
	Theological School Nyasoso		1952-55
Career	Catechist		1940-52
	Pastor		1955-

(Original in English)

"The course of my life was the call of God. My baptism was not of my own personal volunteer to be baptised. The possibility was only in the hands of the parents who had intrusted their son (and daughter) in school. Of course there were some concrete, and particular reasons that some children were not allowed to be baptised. If a child receives baptism it will not be engaged again as a member of a juju society. Secondly he will not be allowed by the Church to marry more than one wife. Anyhow I was to inform my parents, brothers and sisters, and as the matter was planned by God, my view was accepted without hesitation. After my baptism, four years later, I was asked to attend the seminary by Rev. Gengenbach.

As regards my going to the seminary there was a fight towards my family and relatives to attend such a school that I shall not earn sufficient salary.... The great temptation that I had was, we lasted five years without a child. Then some people were discouraging my wife to get out and marry somebody else, with a view that I am a barrener. But God never forgets our prayers, and gave us a child in 1946.....

In the year 1950 I was nominated by the General Synod as a candidate for the Theological Training Centre Nyasoso. Again the same action repeated as well as the time when I was asked to go

to the Seminary. The whole Mundani tribe protested against it that I should resume a profession which would not allow me to return home and to care for my home as regards native law and custom. As a poor catechist, there was nothing that I should start the life with. Then 30 people promised making a collection of 30 pounds to help me for my time in training and to get a singer machine for my wife....

In June 1952 we were called to the Theological Training Centre. (Nso describes the many illnesses and other misfortunes he had during this time and then goes on). Generally speaking, I can say, perhaps it is assigned by God, because immediately when our ordination took place on 10th July, 1955, and on the 10th and 11th October, 1955, I dreamt, I approached to lake where I heard a voice calling at me, "Sango Pastor Nso" three times. When I answered, the voice repeated again do you believe in God? I then began to confess, my legs were not on the ground but in the air by a yard high. My confession was that I do not know God, but through Jesus Christ my saviour I believe that there is God Almighty who created heaven and earth. When I had confessed my feet were dropped down. Inside the lake I saw one European fat and stout walking from one end of the lake to another and disappeared, the second the same as well as the third. They were identical to one and another in body, and dressed in one uniform. When they had passed or disappeared one young African came from the lake and brought me three knives in degrees, long, longer and longest, and in addition to that he gave me a tin of motor oil to be rubbing my hands. After

when he had disappeared I carried these things going away from the lake, and there was an earth-quake and a great violent tornado, trees fell on me and the ground was shaking. Passing the place and approaching to another place I saw a group of murders with sticks, guns, spears and cutlasses who tried to kill me. I defended myself and gave one of the murders a heavy concussion on the chest and he fell down and died. I regretted to have killed the man. I prayed and shook the body, he awoke and came to life again. Then all the three murders escaped. Again I met a group of three, three feet high, fat and white. They tried to stop me but they failed to do so. Passing these three adventurers I saw a wide field, and very far away I saw a sea. There on the field I laid myself down to rest. There my dream ended.

My life to be converted as a Christian, and to carry this task, it is not the word of God in the Bible alone, God has revealed Himself to me in so many ways, sometimes to encourage my paganistic environment, I got a son that his name was mentioned to me when it was still four years for the child to be born. I cannot write all to emphasise about my life, I am even judged when I was sick, my name was called in a book, the man asked me my wife and children, he told me all what was my idea about marriage, and what I had done against God's will in 1947 and it was exact. He dictated what was my ambition about marriage when I was not yet married and that was so. I should say God has really revealed to my life certain things to reframe my pagan environment and my

little faith as He did with Abraham to divide with pagan's home entirely.

Name	John Agbo Etang	
Hometown	Ajayukndip	
Tribe	Keaka	
Schools	Vernacular Ajayukndip	1911-12
	Knabenschule	1913-14
	Theological School Nyasoso	1946-47
Career	Catechist	1916-41
	Evangelist	1942-53
	Pastor	1953-

(Translation from Duala)

The answer to the questions about my life.

I was born in the village of Ajayukndip in the Keaka Tribe. Day and year are not known because in those days we had nobody who knew a calendar. My father's name was Etang Besem Orok and my mother's Besem Ajire. Both of them were pagans; my father was a member of the isango "Nyamkpe," and my mother belonged to the women society (isango a bito) "Ndem." I was the second child but my eldest brother died early. After me came three other brothers and one of them died also. My father died in 1911 and it is in his house that the first catechist, Eduard Sone, started to teach. At the time he came to our village the people brushed those children up they wanted to attend school, the others were hidden. I was amongst the latter ones. But two friends of mine, Yakob Arrey and Simon Mbanjong, who were allowed to attend, told the catechist about me and I was also admitted. This first catechist died soon. 1912 we received Thomas Efange as our teacher and 1913-14 I went to the Knabenschule at Besongabang. Due to the war further education was impossible. In those days people who knew how to read and write were few in Mamfe Division and I could have had a well paid job.

But I refused and went back to my village to preach and teach. In 1916 I had built a small congregation on the foundation which my two teachers had laid there. We began to go round the neighbouring villages Mbakang, Afab, Ogomoko, Ewele and Nkogo, evangelising. This made many people hate me, because it touched their work (losanga myanga, ngambi). I received no salary for my work in those days.

1925 the missionaries came back. After a short course I was again sent to my hometown where I stayed 1925-26, after which I was transferred to Akak 1927-29. 1930-33 I headed the congregation in Mamfe and it is there that I lost my first wife in 1931. 1934-39 I was transferred to Besongabang where I married my second wife in 1936. I had wanted to remain single, but my friends and my family were opposed to this. 1940-42 Tombel 1943-45 Bakebe and 1946-47 I was in the theological training centre at Nyasoso and from there I was sent back to Mamfe and since 1953 I am stationed at Ossing.

The last shall be the first and the first shall be the last. I thank God who set me to proclaim his salvation and to be a witness of Jesus Christ and not of great wisdom (seto na dibie jasam). I am also thankful to my Church who has borne me up to this day, because I know that I am in no way worthy to be called a worker of God. But for his grace I became what I am now. I give thanks to God that we now receive Church workers who are better trained to do this work.

Name	Samuel Malive	
Hometown	Likombe	
Tribe	Bakweri	
Schools	Vernacular Likombe	1932-34
	Primary Bonjongo and Buea	1935-40
	Catechist Training Centre	1945-47
	Theological School Myasoso	1955-58
Career	Catechist	1948-52
	Evangelist	1953-54
	Pastor	1958-

(Original in English)

When my mother conceived me, my father fell sick. He was taken in the bush at the side of their farm in a hut and they stayed there while my elder brothers were in search of medicine till he recovered. In that hut I was born; I do not know the year.... During my school time I felt pains in the joints and I was told that I am suffering from Rheumatism. From that time my heart was never happy, because I feel that my body is not normal as it ought to be..... My father died in 1930 when I was still young. I had to leave school in 1940 for lack of money and my mother and brothers arranged to marry me very early. I married in the year 1943 and she died July 1944 after she put to bed a male child. The child also passed away after two weeks. I regarded all this as a shock in my life. From that time I had nobody to chat with. I was baptised on the 25th December, 1941. My daily prayer was that "O God make me do any honourable work in this world." One day I was reading Roman 10 and I was touched in my heart with verses 14-15.¹ On the other day I was looking these verses, in the Church after morning prayer, in the vernacular Bible which belonged to the catechist. The preacher came into the Church while I was

1) "But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!"

standing at the window looking for those verses. He sent his voice to me and said: "Do you like to go to the Seminary?" My answer to him was: "That is why I am looking in the Bible." When Pastor J. Ekese came to Likombe for the celebration of Holy Communion I told him that I would like to go to the Seminary and he told me that I could only go there the following year.

Name	Peter Ebot Tabi	
Hometown	Ossing	
Tribe	Keaka	
School	Vernacular Besongabang	1925-26
	Primary Buea	1927-32
	Catechist Training Centre	1933-36
	Theological College Kumasi	
	Ghana	1949-52
Career	Catechist	1937-41
	Evangelist	1942-53
	Pastor	1954-

(Original in English)

I was born about 1914 in a little village called Takpa about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the town of Ossing. My father died when I was only six years of age. The course of my life was not an easy one, as it is the case with orphans. In the year 1925 I left Takpa, my village, and stayed with an uncle of mine at the town of Besongabang. In the following year I was admitted in a vernacular school where I remained for one year and moved to Buea Government school for almost 8 years. After completing my Std. VI in this school I went to work at Duala for one year. While in Duala one night, I dreamt and I was given a passage to read from the Bible (Revelation 2.16)¹ after reading this text I made up my mind not to remain at

1) "Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth."

Duala again. I returned to Buea and wrote an application to the Secretary of the Basel Mission, then Rev. J. Ittmann, requesting him to be trained in our seminary at Nyasoso.....

Name	Moses A. Fondo	
Hometown	Medig	
Tribe	Menemo ¹	
Schools	Vernacular Bamenda	1936-37
	Primary Bafut, Mbengwi	1937-42
	Catechist Training Centre	1943-44
	Grade III Elementary Teacher	
	Training Centre Nyasoso, Bali	1946-48
	Grade II Higher Elementary	
	Teacher Training Centre Kumba	1951-52
	Trinity College Umuahia Nigeria	1956-58

(Original in English)

Of a heathen but noble family. Father a prince and mother a princess. But my father was a polygamist with 12 wives. I grew with the children of my uncle in my uncle's home. Since my uncle is a Christian I naturally followed suit. Later after the death of my father my mother became a Roman Christian while I was already a Christian after my uncle in the Basel Mission Church.....

1956 was a turning point in my life. I decided for active ministry and I was offered a chance to go to the Trinity College Umuahia in Eastern Nigeria. The course was quite good and interesting. I successfully completed the course at the end of 1958. Started as a fresher in the field of the Lord in January 1959. On 7th June 1959 I was fully ordained into the Ministry of the Lord in the Presbyterian Church.

Now I continue this new career in His Name.

1) Menemo is in the Grassfield District.

Par. 14. The Duala Language as a Means of Communication.

Seeing the various possibilities of misunderstanding the biblical message among the Cameroonians the question arises; how far do peculiarities in the Duala Language present an insuperable problem of communication? And how far has the adoption of current Duala Terms in Bible Translation inevitably led the African to read his own connotations into these terms, instead of allowing these terms to be recreated by the Christian connotations?

In the following we try to show the difficulties in the example of the word "holy."¹

The Word holy in Duala is translated with sanga which carries the meaning of clear, pure, clean, white and in the figurative sense; to put something right, to be without defect, to be without fault, to be in no danger before magic powers. The following examples will help to make the meaning of the verb sanga clear:
Mboti ni sangi = clean clothes.

bwambo bongu be sangi - your case (in court) is clear, meaning it is incontestable.

Of a man whose living soul has been decreased in power and who

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- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1) Literature: | in Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament by Gerhard Kittel. |
| <i>ἅγιος</i>
Holy | in Etymological Dictionary of Modern English by Ernest Weekley. |
| Heilig | in Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde by Johannes Hoopes. |
| Sanga in | Wörterbuch der Duala-Sprache by E. Hinkelacker. |
| Sanga in | Volkskundliche und Religiöse Begriffe im Nördlichen Waldland von Kamerun by John Ittmann |

therefore is exposed to many dangers one says: 'nol' ao e si sangi - his "body is disarranged, only by magic means can he be "rearranged" = sangise.

From the above we see that the verb sanga is a rather common word, much used in everyday speech. The noun bosangi was used to translate Holy and Holiness in the Bible and basangedi for holy men.

Does sanga in any way cover the meaning of קדש in the Old Testament or ἁγος in the New Testament?

The word קדש was originally a concept of the cult and carried no moral meaning. But with the emphasis on " the Holy Name of God יהוה קדש שם dina la Loba la Bosangi Lev. 20, 3; 22, 2 and Ez. 36, 20) it changed from a cult concept to a personal attribute of God. By this change the notion holiness became combined with God himself, so that his holy name stands opposite all creation. The same happened to two other notions: יהוה קדשו His Holy Word eyal'ao ya bosangi (Ps. 105, 42) and to יהוה קדשו His Holy Spirit mudi mao ma bosangi (Isaiah 63, 10). Name, Word and Spirit of God are all three forms of his revelation, as קדש they are opposite to everything in this world.

Yahvehs' holiness wants the holiness of his people as a condition for the intercourse between them: "you shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev. 19, 2). This cult holiness comprehends cult cleanness and therefore also personal cleanness; with the latter we have reached moral (read ethical) grounds.

In the New Testament, which has its roots in the Old Testament, the notion of holiness becomes more personal. The predicate ἁγος holy becomes the expression for God himself and his Son. As

Christians we are baptised into the death of Jesus Christ the Son of God (Rom. 6, 3; Col. 2, 12). In this we became part of God and therewith holy as he is. As ἁγῶν holy men basangedi our lives are now to be a "living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God." (Rom. 12, 1) This sacrifice shows itself in the Christian love and in this also reaches moral grounds.

We have shown that the words שָׁמַיִם and ἁγῶν are both in a very peculiar way linked up with God's person himself and his dealings with Israel and this world and his self-disclosure in his Son Jesus Christ. They both grew organically out of this peculiar history. It is therefore impossible to find correspondent terms in any other Religion or Philosophy.

Already the old Greek word ἁγῶν from which the New Testament ἁγῶν originates had a different meaning. ἁγῶν means shy, timid in the sense of reverence as well as in the sense of curse. The adjective ἁγῶν is similar to καθαρός "clean," which comes much nearer to the Duala bosangi than to שָׁמַיִם.

The English word "holy" comes from the Anglo Saxon halig; the Dutch and German heilig, the Norse heilagr and the Gothic hailag have the same root. Joh. Hoops writes about it: "this adjective (heilig) has changed its meaning considerably because of the impact of Christianity. In the sources which are available, it is never connected with a person but always with objects. The German 'heilig,' he goes on, 'is restricted to objects and is similar to what Religious Science calls tabu.'"

It is interesting to remember that Ulfila in his translation of the Gothic Bible avoided the word hailag and took weihs, which was probably less connected with religion.¹

This brings us back to what we said before, namely that it is impossible to find words corresponding exactly to the Old Testament "holy" because it grew out of its peculiar history. Only if these words used for the translation of $\psi \gamma \rho$ are filled with the contents of the revelational history, shall they become a proper translation. This counts not only for the translation of holy, but for any biblical terms in any language.

In the following we shall give the meaning and background of a few biblical terms in Duala:

1) Friso Melzer: Der Christliche Wortschatz der Deutschen Sprache p. 319.

κηγούρελε

to preach

langwalanga originally means to countfigurative: a langi mba ka mulemba =

he took me for a witch.

langa = to read; the idea behind this is

probably "to count letters".

langisane = to compareelangisan = comparisonlangea = to read to somebodylangwa = to report, to deliver a speechmulango = Reportmulangwedi = Reader, Preacherbelangwedi = Predication, Sermon

Sin

bobeἁμαρτία bobe = Sin; originally means badness, wickedness.

It is often connected with curse, bad luck or enchantment. (In pidgin English, for example, the sentence "God our Father forgive us our many sins" would be translated with "God we Papa make you forgive we we plenty bad").

μετάνοια

Repentance

jatele

atele = to repent; originally, to turn round, to turn back.

atele eyala = to twist a word = to twist somebody's statement.

atele also carries the meaning "to change one's mind".

and

Time

Ponda

Anybody who is acquainted with the difficulties to translate these two terms correctly into English will also be aware of how delicate the translation of these terms into Duala must be. What do the Cameroonians traditionally know about time? They know days, months and years. Hours and weeks¹ were unknown and they have no original words for them; awa is an assimilation of the English hour and woki of the German Woche. The day (buna) falls into two parts; bulu the night and the day - time which again falls into three parts: morning (idiba), midday (kosi)² and evening (ebiamu). The month (modi) is naturally identical with the moon also called modi. The year (mbu) falls into two parts; the rainy season (pond' epupa) and the dry season (ponda loe)³.

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- 1) Ittmann considers that the period of time which comes nearest to our week is 'term' in the sense of a fixed day (dikaki la ponda) which comes up periodically like a market day that e.g. takes place every ninth day. (Zeiten und Zeichen im vorderen Kamerun; in Evang. Miss. Mag. 1930. p. 213 ff.)
 - 2) The word Kosi comes from the German 'Kanone' (cannon) which used to be fired at 12 noon. Therefrom pond' a kosi = time of the cannon.
Dinkelacker; Duala - Wörterbuch p. 41.
 - 3) It is quite possible that originally they counted every season for one year.

χρόνος (modicum) means a short period of time, whereas καιρός (momentum) is used in the sense of a definite moment. As in English so in Duala the word ponda = time is used in translating the two Greek terms. The English translation of καιρός sometimes also uses 'seasons' (e.g. Acts 1 7; 14, 7; Gal. 4,10)¹ or hour (e.g. Rom.13, 11) or periods (e.g. Acts 17.26) or opportunity (e.g. Heb. 11, 15) or age (e.g. Heb. 9,9). Whereas the Duala translation introduces mudiyo = flood - tide in the sense of term (e.g. Luc. 4,13; Acts 14, 17; Rom. 13, 11) or ebe² = ebb - tide (e.g. Acts 1,7; 1. Thess. 5,1). Here is an example from 1. Thess. 5.1:

χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν

ponda na bebe

the times and the seasons

In general it may be said that the translation of the Bible into Duala was carefully done, and the best possible terms were chosen. But if we take a passage as Mark 1, 15 "The time (καιρός) is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel" then this time (ponda) is something which can only be understood in the context of the revelational history of the old and new Testament. This kairos is not just a moment (momentum) but it is history and man is called to take up the kairos of God in heart, and will, and life. This kairos is a decision of God,

1) The English text is based on the Revised Standard Version of 1952.

2) From German Ebbe.

and man should subject himself to this decision and be obedient to it. It is therefore something completely out of the wide field of experience postulated by any cultural and religious background and because of this also non-existent in their vocabulary.

If we ask the question again, how far the adoption of current Duala terms in Bible translation led the African to read his own connotation into these terms, instead of allowing these terms to be recreated by the Christian connotation, the answer will have to be a double one: first that single biblical terms will never be understood in any language if they are isolated from their context, and secondly that these terms will only be recreated with the whole biblical message by the Holy Spirit and man's response to it.

CHAPTER 4

Christian Ethics and Tribal Ethics.

Par. 15. Principles.

We stated¹ that the questions: "how do I become good?" and "how do I do good?" have to be disregarded as irrelevant for Christian ethics, and that instead of them, we must pose the totally different question "What is the will of God?" The origin of Christian ethics is therefore not the reality of one's own ego, not the reality of the world, nor the reality of standards and values, but the reality of God in His revelation in Jesus Christ. We have tried to show² how this reality becomes actual through preaching.

This preaching creates in men a radical change (*μεταβολή*), which is the real root of a new consciousness of history and of community. This consciousness of history has nothing to do with the self-consciousness of a community or corporation, that is conscious of its meaning, its might, its honourable age, its nobility, or its mandate in history. It is much more the consciousness that it is nothing of itself, but that it has become something through the act of God. It is the consciousness of God's act and decision which comes to men through God's unfettered might. It puts them in a new situation and calls them to new action in the community of their fellowmen.

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- 1) Part 2, Introduction.
 - 2) Par.12, 1 The Kerygma.

Par. 16. The Christian Understanding of Sin.

Even without the assertions made by Christian faith, it will be understood that evil is not identical with a series of isolated transgressions of moral demands, but that the decisive factor is the basic position of which these deeds or omissions are the expression.

For the Christian likewise, evil does not consist in isolated sins, nor yet in a perverse basic direction of character which one could perhaps remedy through a change of disposition in the power of man himself. Evil, or sin, is for the Christian the attempt of man to get along without God or in strict terms his "will to be as God."¹ Sin is the shutting of the heart against God's grace, or God's life, or, in other words, basically a lack of faith.² Sin is a wrong relationship with God (ἁμαρτία) which has³ as its consequence moral errors that are to a greater or less degree shocking. It is the attempt of man to help himself, the faith that he can of his own strength stand in opposition to God.⁴ It is particularly important that Christian assertions about sin discover these roots and the real nature of sin in which all men naturally agree. For otherwise discussion of sin becomes superficial, merely moralistic, and therefore bound up with the false idea

1) Genesis 3,5

2) John 16, 9; 9, 41.

3) Romans 1, 18ff.

4) Matthew, 7,16 + 20; 12, 33-37; 15, 19.

that man has the possibility of bettering himself. But the other side must also not be forgotten. The New Testament speaks very clearly and concretely about the individual sins in which this sinfulness that is common to all works itself out.¹ Speaking in this manner about individual sins can be very personal and unpleasant when the finger is pointed to the working out of sinfulness which is, in especial, the sin of an individual. All this must be considered when we now come to speak about Christian Ethics; or in other words when a man asks this question about the Will of God in his own, peculiar, situation.

How does a Christian come to concrete decisions for his actions? From the answer to this question we can see whether what we stated above is understood or not. We are quoting two Cameroonian Christians, whom we will call Malachi and Manasseh, on this subject and we shall see from their answers how one of them is really trying to understand a Christian's actions as depending on his faith, whereas the other, because of his misunderstanding of the Christian message is bound, as we shall show, to answer in the traditional, heathen, way. Malachi said: "From John 3,4 we read that 'Whoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law'. A Christian in the face of evil will decide whether his action or performance conforms with the truths of the Bible. He knows the price of sin is death and the reward for goodness is God's abundant blessing. If a Christian wants, say, to do bad against his neighbour, he would decide either to do it and bear God's judgment, or

1) See Matthew 15, 19; Galatians 5, 19-21.

to leave it because he is convinced by the law that to do bad is sinful. On the other hand, if he is spurred to do a good act, he goes in with diligence because he knows it is an opportunity for him to offer his services to his fellow man in God's name. - A true Christian's decisions give no room for evil to breed in his heart. He is always guided by St. Paul's word of Roman 12, 21 "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good".

Manasseh said: "A true Christian decides whether an act he is going to perform is good, when he sees that the action he is going to perform will not annoy anybody, and does not go against the commandments of God then he will say the action is a good one. If the action he is going to perform is a bad action, he will know it when the action goes contrary to the ten commandments, and such an action also brings confusion in a town then he will know that such an action is a bad one".

Even if Malachi's statement does not satisfy a theologian, we must acknowledge that for him a Christian's decisions and actions are his obedience to his faith. Whereas for Manasseh the typical heathen fear that the community could come to harm is in the foreground; "will not annoy anybody" and "such action also brings confusion in a town" are of much greater concern than the casual mentioning of the ten commandments. In the next paragraph we shall show the roots of Manassehs' understanding.

Par. 17 Tribal Ethics.

1. Ontology as Basis and Norm of Good and Evil.

In our exposition of the heathen understanding of self we established the mutual dependence of all positions of life. The Universe is for the Cameroonian, as for primitive people in general, a unity. We remember how the whole life cycle, and practices in general, are centred lastly on the one idea, the "eternal" continuity of family, lineage and tribe. Their ontology is therefore centred around those vital powers which augment or sustain the power of living of the individual and his kin. God is the creator. He has given life to man, and all things in the creation are bearers of vital powers to a greater or lesser degree; they are created to increase man's vital powers. We remember words like balendedi, ngina and bwanga. The strengthening of the vital powers and their maintenance are, logically, in the interest of all, and they are therefore matters for the ancestors and the elders. From this ontology good and evil are logically derived. Anything that is of service to the strengthening or maintenance of the vital powers is "good"; anything that impoverishes or destroys them is "evil".

2. The Good and the Evil Man.

According to what we established above, the question whether a man is good or evil must be judged by whether his behaviour leads to the maintenance or increase of the vital powers, or to the destruction of them either in the individual man or in the community. Naturally there exists in practice a complete gradation of evil deeds in which precedence is arranged in various ways.¹ A.W. Hoernle

1) See words as: musango, musoso, ho kwa, togo besa.

in an article on "An Outline of the Native Conception of Education in Africa" says: This moulding of individuals to the social norm in the function of education such as we find it among these people"¹. Indeed, education, which reached its climax in the initiation course, was completely directed to preparing the young people for membership in the community. Covenants between individuals and families helped to equal out powers and to establish peace. Taboo regulations helped to maintain the powers, and the chief task of the secret society was the arrangement and holding together of the community. This is the circle which held the community together and good or bad acts have to be valued in the light of this understanding. Seen from here we have to distinguish clearly between bad medicine, sorcery and witchcraft on the one side and the different methods that helped the community to track down the evil doer. E.E. Evans-Pritchard therefore says rightly about witch-detection: "As a system of moral philosophy notions of witchcraft define the moral sentiments and have great influence upon conduct. For witchcraft is not a random force which strikes here and there without design. Any one may be a witch but it is of no importance so long as he does not direct his powers against his neighbours, and he will only do this when motivated by hatred, jealousy, envy, greed and so forth. They say that these sentiments go ahead and that witchcraft follows after them, meaning that they are the origin of every act of witchcraft. Hence they may be regarded as diagnostic of witchcraft in a person and a man who wishes to avoid suspicions of witchcraft must refrain from displaying ill-will towards his neighbours. Moreover, the man who quarrels with his neighbours and speaks ill of them is the man whose

1) Africa 1931; p. 147.

name these neighbours will place before the oracles when they are sick, so that there is a tendency for socially undesirable members of a community to be also its acknowledged witches."¹

In the light of what we said above, we now understand the statement of Manasseh in the last paragraph when he said that "a true Christian decides whether an act he is going to perform is good, when he sees that the action he is going to perform will not annoy anybody", or that bad action is going to bring "confusion in a town". We do not believe it to be an exaggeration when we say that the majority of our Christians would agree with Manasseh. This shows now on ethical grounds how much the Christians are still tied to the traditional understanding of self and of life, which is a confirmation of what we said on doctrinal grounds in the chapter before.

We shall now give the statements of three Christians on the question how does a pagan decide if an act he is going to perform is good or bad?

Nehemiah: "A pagan will not mind judging himself whether the action goes contrary to the ten commandments. He will just do it to please himself, his juju (secret society or medicine), and may try to do it in a way that he may try to convince other members of the public to join his juju".

Nicholas: "It is definite that there are always very few exceptions that a man is born a Christian from the mother's womb. So every Christian today had been previously in the same thoughts as a pagan, but at his moment of becoming a Christian, his life changes. In the decision of a pagan there comes also the conscience which judges

1) Witchcraft among the Azande; p. 417.

him for it is inborn. The pagan who feels there is nobody else beside him does an act whether right or wrong by himself with intense sense of his wrong worship of Gods they are all and all in his life

Nathaniel: "Pagan, literally means, a worshipper of false gods. From this definition it is clear that a pagan believes in man made gods and thus is more directed by the laws and rituals of paganism. - In the face of evil, a pagan will therefore examine the laws of his gods as to whether they include a punishment for the bad he is nearing to do. And he will always do the evil act since the laws of his religion do not forbid him from, say, divorcing his wife. - What a Christian regards as bad may not come under his own section of bad acts. Similarly his good acts are mostly directed by the laws of the pagan society. For instance our well known Ekpe society in Mamfe forbids stealing and inflicts quite a heavy punishment for it. It may also be reasonable to add in this connection that a pagan as well as a Christian has a humanitarian spirit. This feeling for the fellow man influences his decisions and often makes a Pagan seem or really be kinder than Christians."

These statements of young, educated, Christians show, with perhaps the exception of Nathaniels, how little understanding the younger generation has for the old order and how small their knowledge is of the traditional way of life. This problem leads us to ask about the position of the young educated man in contemporary Social life.

Par. 18. The Individual in a changing Society.

Our Society was, and in many parts still is, characterised by the prevalence of the idea of community. The individual recedes before the group. The whole of existence from birth to death is organically embodied in the life of the lineage, and life appears to have its full value only in these close ties. Though there is in this society a well-ordered graduation between persons who command and who obey, yet the prevailing feeling is one of equality. The life of every individual follows more or less the same pattern according to his or her sex. The life of the family is deeply permeated by the idea that its members are caught up in an all-embracing order, which as an individed entity rules over the world in general. Such a view of life does not permit any individualistic outlook in the Western sense. The ruling interest in life must be to keep and to establish the social harmony, continuity and well-being of the community the individual belongs to.

This "Ideal" self contained community of the fathers no longer exists in the Cameroons. Here as in all Africa the old order has been disturbed by forces from outside which are leading to its complete dissolution. The authority and forces that created and supported this order are no longer recognised by many people or have been broken by the Government and replaced by a system of law based upon European conceptions of right and wrong. Even in backward areas, though people still seem to live as they did one hundred years ago, the influence of the Western powers has had a telling effect.

1. Law and Authority.

As we have seen "law" and authority in our communities are not centralised, as in other regions, in the person of the Chief. The political authority is vested in village councils and associations. Government and good order is a function of the corporate bodies, men and women organised in their respective societies, age-groups and the various lineages, which make up the local Community. These different elements each have their representation in the political system.

These authoritative forces which regulated and to some extent still regulate the conduct of members of our communities have not been "departmentalised" and standardised into what a Westerner understands by Law and Authority. For our word "law", as C.K. Meek¹ says, "carries with it very definite implications of state authority, judges and magistrates, codes and courts, police and prisons, which have no counterparts in primitive society".

It is clear that even a system of Indirect Rule as a form of local self-government could not leave it to the Secret Societies to deal with criminal matters or employ certain forms of Ordeal for the detection of the culprit. Even if the secret societies still find means and ways to force people to submit to their rules, their authority, is now much reduced.

In our district of the Cameroons, Western influence seems to

1) Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe, p. XIII.

have been of greatest significance in creating a general freedom to travel which has made it possible for individuals to leave the home of their ancestors, and settle elsewhere for varying periods of time. Formerly an individual could only settle in the area covered by the tribe he belonged to or by that of some neighbouring tribe with which his tribe was on friendly terms and between which covenants (male) existed. There was also no cogent reason why a man should move beyond those boundaries. Today thousands of labourers find their living in the coastal plantations or with other employers far away from their home. Furthermore, there is in most of the areas no occupation for the educated man, and he has to look for a job elsewhere. Friction between the traditional way of life and the Social world of the educated man thus derives not only from the power of the new to draw him away, but equally from the inability of the old order to find any satisfactory place for him.

2. Education.

Traditional Education in the Cameroons which reached its climax in the initiation course, was directed to preparing the young people for membership in the Community. The small child was always with its mother wherever she might go. Later the child was mainly left alone with his playmates and was expected to find its place in the routine of daily life by imitating other persons in its surroundings. During the long evenings, sitting in between the adults congregated around the fire they listened to the stories, fairy-tales, sayings and riddles related by old men and women and by this became gradually initiated into the history and wisdom of their lineage and tribe. A systematic and intensive course of education was carried through

preparatory to the initiation rites, which marked the transition from childhood to adult life and admission to full membership of the group. It is important to remember that here also it was the old man (mutudu) imparting this traditional knowledge to the younger ones. Each generation educated the one following; were this not the case, there could be no continuity.

With the introduction of Schools this continuity-so important for the life of primitive community - was broken. Today one rarely ever hears of an initiation course and if there is one somewhere in a backward area, it lasts for a very short time only. It is naturally the educated man who knows least about his traditional background. The continuity is broken and the gap between old and young, "uneducated" and educated, is constantly widening; as Pierre Charles¹ has so well described: "The introduction of books always kills reverence for age. In a society with an oral culture where nothing has been written down, the aged are surrounded with the same respect and awe as libraries, codes of law and museums with us. Anything that is not mentioned by the elders will be lost for ever. Tradition is a living thing; it is learnt like a trade by lesson from a master. In our countries the book takes the place of the eye-witness and the document overshadows the human agent."

1) Tribal Society and Labour Legislation p. 430.

As we have mentioned, the Cameroonian traditionally educates his child for life in the community. This is the real meaning and the strength of his educational methods and aims. But here also lies their weakness, since the whole system of traditional education is focussed on the group, it neglects the individual. As D. Westermann¹ says: "The child is not regarded as a developing personality but as a member of the group. The individual must conform to the type recognised as normal, and deviations from it are looked at askance, for they threaten to break through the framework of tradition and so become a danger to the community. Such an education does not entirely rule out the development of personality, but the state of African society shows that it is obviously a hindrance to such development".

As is well known, Western education has in abundance this individual note which the traditional way of education lacks. Furthermore, it pre-supposes an understanding of the world and of life foreign to the man brought up in the traditional culture.

Traditional tribal life and Western education are therefore incompatible. The educated man who as an individual stands on his own feet, is for this same reason also the uprooted man.

3. Money.

Our society is predominantly an agricultural one. As long as village life was not affected by influences beyond its control it was economically a more or less self-contained unit. Iron tools were among the few things needed from outside its bounds and these

1) The African Today and Tomorrow p. 101

were obtained from other villages or tribes by barter against hides or other suitable products. Trade in the modern sense did not exist. Also there were no rich and poor in the modern sense; if there was a famine all suffered alike and if there was plenty they all received their share. Then came the European trading firms, paying for the cash crops, first in kind and then in cash. The Plantations wanted thousands of labourers, Government, Missions and Firms started employing people and paying wages. The system of paying wages for work done, and money for goods sold, has probably more than anything else revolutionised the behaviour of the individual in his surrounding. This system enabled man to escape from the "tyranny" of the group. It gave him the opportunity to isolate himself from his community and to stand economically on his own feet, as an "individual".

4. Christianity.

In 1886 the Basel Mission sent a petition to the Foreign Office in Berlin asking for permission to start missionary work in the Cameroons. Two of its paragraphs are of particular interest in the present connection. They are:

- 1) "Excluding any political aims the society has as its goal the planting of "Evangelical" Christianity among the Heathen and the assembling of the Christians into Christian Congregations".
- and
- 2) "The Society sees it as her duty to preserve the national peculiarities of the people among which she is working, except in so far as these peculiarities being heathen must give way to Christian practices".

From the above we see that the Missionary Society had no intention of interfering with the traditional order unless it conflicted with Christianity. From what we know about the traditional background, it is of course clear that the missionaries could not and did not agree with the two pillars upon which life and authority were built; namely the ancestor cult and the secret societies.

We have seen that traditionally the freedom of decision and behaviour of an individual were markedly curtailed and the group arrogated to itself much of the individual's responsibility. As a Christian, man stands before God and knows himself responsible as an individual for his own community.

5. The Individual Today.

Law and Authority, Education, modern Economics and Christianity are the main agents leading gradually to the dissolution of traditional Society. The individual standing on his own feet, released from the traditional bond, away from his home, is deprived of the protection which he enjoyed in his community. It seems impossible to us that man can consciously or unconsciously ignore his traditional background without being "punished" for this by his own personal or collective subconscious, the latter according to C.G. Jung¹ being inborn. A strong feeling of insecurity is naturally the consequence which shows itself in different aspects.

We think that the arrogance with which many educated people - Africans and Europeans - treat their fellows has its roots in this

1) C.G. Jung: Bewusstes und Unbewusstes, p.11-53

"Ueber die Archetypen des Kollektiven Unbewussten".

feeling of insecurity and is a consequence of their being uprooted from the surrounding which gave them security.

It is a well known fact that in coastal areas, or in towns, with their mixed population where traditional life has lost its strength and people are no more tied together by all the rules and taboos which protect them as an entity, witchcraft and general mistrust have increased. Therefore business in charms and "medicines", preferably imported from other areas, flourishes more than ever before. The following is a copy of an advertisement sent by mail to different people all over the country, advertising charms imported from India.

Saraswati Kavodia

(All purpose Charm)

This Talisman can be used for the following.

To win the Races and Bets

To see answer in Examination

For Topping in the class

To Destroy the Poison in food

For Barren women to get child

To Win Court cases and land dispute

To destroy the Power of Witchcrafts

To kiss a lady By Force

For getting quick Employment

For Trader to get quick Sales

To get promotion

To go Transfar or refuse Transfar (transfer of teachers e.g.)

To free from sickness in short it is a whole life charm of all purpose we only want to sell it to our customer at a reduced price.

Full instructions how to operate it for all the above will follow when you order it. For all the power that this Talisman have, it is only 5s. 6d.

Send your order today to:-

DE' BORAH JONES

Luck Holder

Rahaaaja Indian Agency

P.O. Box 240

Ebute-Metta (Nigeria)

Another striking feature of this period of cultural transition is that the mind of the educated man is split into two. On the one side there is the traditional outlook and on the other modern western education. With this state of mind he is a living proof that a synthesis between the two, as they are now, is hardly possible.

The two following examples should help to clarify what we said above. The first is a letter written by an African to a missionary. Words and notions taken over from Christianity and Western Science are transformed and filled with traditional cosmology and philosophy which can only be understood against the background described in this dissertation.

"Dear Sir,

I have been directed by my brother to write you. I have been wanting some chance of contact with people who are specially interested in this line of Psychology Study. I had since attached myself to it and will pursue it till my last days are called.

It is a special phase of science which is so fascinating in scope and offers much interest for spiritual world which is correlative with the former.

I have been communicating with America on certain difficulties which beset me with applied Psychology, at times I am given some catalogues to purchase some articles for my practice but I find it difficult to buy owing to dollar value. I shall be immensely grateful should you help me through in ordering and getting things from America without trouble. Last time I had certain orders with a fellow friend to some amount from Oracle Laboratories and P.S. Bureau of which Brimstone, Safron and Sublimate of Mercury were very essential, up to date these things are not got. That is the kind of experience I have been getting.

I hope you will accept me as a friend of yours. I have been living with Europeans since my early youth, even up till now, whenever I happen to go home on holidays, my European Master will like to invite me to spend some time with him to help him in the office. I have encountered much difficulty in life since my parents death owing to some evil eyes, that's the reason I pursue this study. As it is said seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all those things will be added unto you. Further, if one really wants visible manifestations of the blessing of life, life must be sought through Spiritual. That is my unshakable Faith in the study of Applied Psychology.

I have got much to write on, but this being our first communication I would like to stop so far till I hear from you soon.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely"

The second example has a different import. One day I was explaining the story of temptation, as related in Genesis 3, to students who were in their fifth year of Teacher Training. After having read the text, I asked the students to explain what it was that opened men's eyes to make them know good and evil. One Student stood up to say that according to him good and evil must have been substances contained in the fruit from the forbidden tree. Some readers might think this was intended as a joke; but no! The idea was seriously discussed by these students who were all over twenty years of age and who all had an educational background of eight years of primary school and four years of Teacher Training behind them and who moreover were all full Church Members. Let us remember that, traditionally, a man through the acquisition of "medicine" receives supernatural powers, which he may use either to his own advantage or to the disadvantage of others (mulondedi). The view expressed by this student, that the powers of good and evil were substances contained in the fruits of the forbidden tree, is therefore understandable.

The majority of these educated people have gone through a mission school where they were baptised, but generally little is to be seen of this new responsibility towards one's fellow men which

should be the natural consequence of a Christian faith. Very often an individualistic, entirely self centred view of life is taken up which recognises no responsibility towards the Church or the Community. The following two quotations are a good illustration of this.

The letter of Appointment for Basel Mission Teachers, which must be signed by every teacher, reads under the heading "Membership of the Basel Mission Church" as follows:

- a) Teachers shall be baptised Christians.
- b) Teachers shall be full members of the Basel Mission Church unless the proprietor with the consent of the Secretary of the Basel Mission gives permission to the contrary.
- c) Teachers shall be subject to the Constitution of the Basel Mission Church in all respects (e.g. concerning marriage, Church - contributions etc.)

Paragraph 178 of the old Church Constitution reads:

"If a member of the Church has reasons for wanting a divorce he should first of all consult the local minister who will then try to bring the parties together again. If that is not possible the case should be brought before the elders and then before the missionary or the pastor. Only the District Synod has the authority to give the consent of the Church for a divorce".

One teacher married a second wife and wanted to put the first wife away. This was reported to the pastor and to the missionary who undertook an investigation to clear matters up. When the

teacher heard about this projected enquiry he wrote a letter to the missionary from which the following quotations are taken; they give a good picture of the modern individualistic Cameroonian.

"I feel it a breach of discipline on the part of a well meaning missionary of your calibre to interfere into one's personal affairs without one's consent, especially when affairs such as these are purely domestic.

.....I cannot see why there is so much fuss about my matrimonial affairs, as I see that the complainant did not bring the marriage to the congregation while it was being contracted. If she can tell you which Missionary, Pastor, Evangelist or Catechist witnessed the marriage from the beginning to the payment of bridal price, I should like to know. I hope she now recognises the importance of the Church because I happened to be employed by the Mission".

The next quotation is taken from the perface of a pamphlet written by a Cameroonian. Its purpose is to "educate the future women of the Cameroons".

"The object of this pamphlet is to instruct and inspire all young damsels who desire to succeed in life. I have travelled widely in many countries and am popular to damsels. This has enabled me to take the view, based on personal experience that life is a market, in which everyone must "sell" himself.

Every man, woman, boy or girl is from that view point salesman; and those damsels who would sell well must reflect on the confessions of "Mojoko the Bakweri Girl".¹

1) J.B. Famo: The confessions of Mojoko the Bakweri Girl.

If on the one hand there is the above mentioned tendency towards an individualistic conception of life, the ties of traditional life are still very strong, and the Christians are not excluded from its influence in respect either of witchcraft or of magic. The following example¹ shows us how even Church workers are no exception from this.

During a refresher course with church workers, some catechists, all originating from the same tribe, refused to take part in a meal of Antelope meat. When asked to state the reasons for their refusal they finally admitted that to eat Antelope meat was a grave offence against their tribal rules. The origin of this rule is, that many years ago their tribe was at war against another tribe. Before the fight a sorcerer was called who killed an Antelope as a sacrifice and said that they would win the war, but should never again eat Antelope meat. After a long discussion with their fellow Catechists and Pastors some of them finally agreed to take part in the meal. Their reluctance shows how strong the tribal ties can still be, even for church workers.

Afterwards the towns and congregations from which these catechists came were very upset about their taking part in this meal. The Christian congregation even refused to accept them as their ministers. The reason for this being that in breaking this taboo they would not only bring ill-luck over themselves, but over the whole community.

1) W. Keller: Report 1954.

CHAPTER 5.

Home Youth and the Family

Introduction.

Par. 19.

In no sphere of society is it so difficult as in the field of family life to become free from ones own cultural background and to see and understand another culture in its own merit, because nowhere else are our own personal feelings so much involved. If we find this difficult it must have been much more so for the early generations of missionaries, convinced as they were that not only their Message but also their Western Culture was the best that could be brought to Africa.¹ We have to accept the criticism contained in the statement heading the report on home and family life of the Africa Church Conference 1958:² "The early missionaries, when they encountered the tribal patterns of the people to whom they preached the Gospel, realised that many of the established practices conflicted sharply with Christian standards. This is still true. However, it is more clearly recognised today that the wholesale abandonment of some of these practices, without the provision of adequate equivalents, can lead to a breakdown of social

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- 1) Although point 6. of the petition of the Basel Mission to the German Government shows some awareness of the problem: "The society sees it as her duty to preserve the national peculiarities of the people among which she is working, except in so far as those being Heathen, must give way to Christian practices".
 - 2) Report of the All - Africa Church Conference; p. 26.

organisation which creates new evils as damaging as the old. Moreover it is now acknowledged that there are features of tribal practice which are consistent with Christian principles and therefore worth preserving". Later on the report states that while many tribal practices must be discouraged there are the following features of tribal life which should be cherished in the Christian Community:

- a) "The fact that marriage is rooted in a bond of unity, established and preserved between the families as well as the individuals concerned, gives security and stability to the relationship between the young husband and wife, and makes help readily available to them in the period of their early adjustments.
- b) The acceptance of the obligation to provide care for all children within the tribal group safeguards the child from abandonment or rejection. There is no need for orphanages in the traditional African community.
- c) Likewise the honour paid to old people and the provision made for their needs within the family circle contrasts favourably with the pitiable plight in which the aged sometimes find themselves in the western world of today."¹

This means that some of the tribal practices may be taken over into the Christian Community whereas others are not acceptable. We have already demonstrated that all these practices form part of a system, and that this system is an entity embracing the whole

1) Ibid. p. 28.

life of an individual and the community he lives in. And from this it follows that one such practice cannot be lifted out of the system in which it was meaningful. In other words, we cannot make a selection of practices which we wish to keep and of others which we reject without breaking the whole system. Therefore one such practice isolated from the whole system has lost its meaning. If the above mentioned report therefore thinks that some features of tribal life represent positive values which should be cherished in the Christian Community, then this is open to misunderstanding. It is true that even now that the structure of traditional life is breaking down, some of its features continue to remain valid. Tradition does not break down in one or two generations, anyway not in areas which still have close ties with rural districts for these are naturally conservative. It is also necessary to reiterate that the Church is not the only, and not even the main Agent breaking down on the traditional structure.¹ This means that it is not left to the Church to pick out or to reject elements of the traditional structure as she pleases! By way of illustration let us take the last of the three features of tribal life which should be cherished in the Christian community: The way in traditional African society in which honour is paid to old people and provision made for their needs within the family circle. We remember that traditionally the major decisions of family, lineage and tribal life rested with the old people. They also were the heads of families

1) In paragraph 18: The individual in a changing society, we mentioned the main agents as being: Law and Authority, Education, Money and Christianity.

and as such made the sacrifices to the ancestors. For the Africans the old man embodies in a particular way the continuity of his lineage. The old man carries not only his own but the lineage's and the tribe's experience, wisdom and cunning, which increase with a man's age. The same applies to old women who are equally esteemed. They know all the customs connected with birth and other dangerous periods in the life of man and also know many remedies against sickness. Both old men and women take a central position in the life of their surroundings and therefore are honoured and end their lives in the family circle. If we wish to perpetuate this state of affairs, then we must at the same time preserve the entire traditional structure of society - a course which it would be impossible to justify and which is out of our control. In place of the decisions of the secret society in which the old man played a leading role, we have favoured constituted law and authority; in place of the old man imparting his traditional knowledge to the younger ones, we have introduced modern school education; in place of the old man's making the offerings to the ancestors on behalf of his kin, we now find the Church proclaiming that Christ is the Lord and that everything and everyone is under him; and instead of the old woman knowing all the customs connected with birth and other dangerous periods, we have midwives, hospitals, schools and domestic science centres. We do not say that these modern agencies pushed the old men and women out of their role. Rather do we maintain that these agencies broke the authority old men and women had in their homes and that when traditional society has been further modified they may be pushed

out of the position they now hold. It is true, as the report says, that we have to appreciate the way honour is paid to old people and provision made for their needs within the family circle in traditional African society. But if the Christian community is called upon to do the same, then she is to do it not because this is an old tradition in society, which as we have seen may change, but in obedience to God's commandment of love!¹ On this basis care for our old people again becomes meaningful. And this ^{is} as true, for Africa as for the western world rightly criticized in the report. It is as impossible, to think of an evolution of tribal practices into Christian ones, as it is to think of an evolution of tribal philosophy into Christian belief. The Christian Community, like the individual Christian, is time and again called to find new forms and standards for her life and to have her old ones judged in the light of God's Word and Spirit.

In the following paragraphs we shall now discuss some of the major problems of home, youth and family life as we meet them in our Cameroonian Church. We have given extended consideration to statements on these subjects by African Christians who wrote them for us, as the terms used and the language will give us the feeling for the mood and the climate in which these problems are seen and discussed today. The report of the All - Africa Church Conference, on "the Church in Changing Africa", to which our Church sent two delegates,

1) Exodus 20. 12: "Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God give you." See also Matthew 15. 1 - 9

proved very helpful because it showed us that most of the problems we are encountering in our Cameroonian Church are the problems of the Christian Church all over Africa. We have therefore taken the conference's views into consideration wherever possible.

Par. 20.

Christian Marriage

Marriage is in African Society a stage in the Life Cycle which everyone must eventually reach by hook or by crook. The social and economic situation in the past made it impossible for a woman to stay on her own; and even to-day it is unthinkable for a woman, whatever her profession, to remain unmarried for long without being considered to be a prostitute. We shall in this paragraph discuss several aspects of African Christian Marriage as they present themselves in the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons. To make the position on Marriage clear, we render parts of the paragraphs of the Church Constitution concerning this point. Under section three in part three: "Worship and Life of the Church", the Constitution deals with "Marriage in the Church" stating:

Par. 87.

"Marriage being a state ordered and blessed by God and a symbol of the relationship between Christ and His Church must not be contracted without careful thought and dependence upon the Lord for guidance. Thus Christian marriages are to be solemnized in Church". and

Par. 88.

"As marriage is based on the common faith in God and the mutual love of the marriage partners it should not be contracted for worldly considerations".

There is no special understanding of Christian Marriage for Africa and another one for Asia or Europe. The basis for our marriage is to be found in Jesus Christ himself, as St. Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians Chap. 5. 21 - 33, instructing man and wife how to live: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that the Church might be presented before him in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies." Let us hear an African's comment on this text:¹ "No one ever paid such a high bride-price, and we who are members of Christ's Church are wonderfully blessed to have such a bridegroom to love us and care for us. If a husband loves his wife like this, he will do all in his power to help her in every possible way in the many difficulties that arise from time to time in the home. And again if the husband loves his wife like this, it will not be difficult for her to 'submit herself to her husband' and they will work together to make their home a centre of peace and joy and love, and each will try to please the other. It is only in a truly Christian home that such a state of affairs is possible".

When we said that there is no special understanding of Christian marriage for Africa but that Jesus Christ is the basis of our marriage, where ever it may be, then we must add to this that the outward form

1) Obadiah Kariuki in Report of the All-Africa Church Conference p. 19.

of marriage may vary according to the particular tradition of a country. From this we take that the fundamental problems of marriage are the same all over the world, but that the particular ones related to tradition and surrounding, may vary.

Par. 21.

Marriage Payment To-day.

As mentioned before; according to traditional custom the contracting of a marriage is considered to be a matter between two lineages rather than between two individuals.

Through marriage the woman's lineage loses the services of one of its members and a potential child bearer. So the man's lineage has to replace this loss by paying, what is called bema = marriage payment. A marriage is therefore legal only, when this payment has been made. Bema means things, objects. Formerly such payment was made in livestock, clothes and other valuable things. To-day it is usually paid in cash and varies between £15 and £200 according to tribe, descent and educational standard of the bride.

Westerners often look at this paying of marriage payment as a degradation of womanhood. We often asked younger, educated women on their feelings about this particular point. They all agree that this payment should be made because it gives them security and permanence to their marriage. It keeps the husband, they say, from just dismissing them in case of discontentment because in such cases he fears the "palaver" involved in getting his marriage payment back. On the other hand as this payment was not made to an individual, but to the wife's family, all those who received their share take an interest in the continuation of the marriage bond.

Formerly it was the father's or the family's business to look and to provide for the son's first wife. To-day this has changed because of the younger peoples cash earnings. A great number of the workers in the plantations go there to save the amount necessary for the marriage payment. What it means for such young workers to pay £70 to £120 in marriage payment with wages of 2/9 to 3/6 per day is not difficult to imagine.

On the women's side, in detribalized areas, it is often only the father who receives the money as an individual, and with this the meaning of the whole institution is lost; only too often has it become a pure business matter.

African church members have long began to feel uneasy about this change. The problem was discussed in several synods; at present the general opinion is that marriage payment should be made, but that there should be an upper limit. Paragraph 88 in the new church constitution, which relates to this matter, reads: "Though this Church regards the giving of dowry as an interim matter to safeguard the marriage state from reckless disruption, it should not be taken as a means of amassing wealth."

We are now giving the full statements of three Cameroonians on the subject "Should Bride-Price (as they call it) be abolished? They give a good insight into the problems arising and show modern Cameroonian opinion.

Origen: "To my opinion Bride-Price should not be abolished because from the very ancient times it has been our culture. To abolish it would mean loss of useful tradition. The parents of the girl receive

the Bride-Price as compensation and good will. Without Bride-Price the state of marriage in our area would become hopeless. As no proper laws prevail marriages would disintegrate at any time.

Children of unpaid mothers are termed bastards and go directly to the mother's family. As the raising of a family by issue is one of the reasons to have major claim over them the Bride-Price must be paid. It also helps to make women more steady in marriages and thereby avoiding prostitution."

Oscar: "Because of high Bride-Price required for a woman, married women are looked upon by their husbands as slaves or are likened to bought animals. They are made to do all menial works while their husbands give them no helping hand. They even pay their husbands taxes. When their husbands die they are forced to mourn with little or no clothing on. On a day of doing funeral ceremony for their late husbands they are compelled to cry and to roll themselves on mud. If they refuse to roll themselves on mud they are fined. As the Bride-Prices paid for them are so high and they cannot return them they bear these throes. When Bride-Prices are low, a married woman will not be considered a slave, for any least maltreatment from her husband, will induce her to seek refuge under mother man (her own lineage) who will straight - off refund her former husband's money.

To abolish Bride-Price condition of wife to husband will be worse. A woman not paid for is not respected in a community. She does not respect her husband and she is likely to abandon her husband at any time. As her husband pays nothing for her, he has no power to restrain her. The husband too will not value her. The love between

the two is not sincere. The woman to win ardent love of her husband may have recourse to drugs ("medicine") which may eventually result in the death of her husband. Women not paid for boldly prostitute. I strongly hold that Bride-Price, with great moderation exist, for the Africans it is a "Marriage Ring".

Obadiah: "In my opinion I say 'Yes' and 'No'.

Reasons for 'No': The Bride-Price has been going on in Africa for many years. It seems that our fore fathers knew the danger that might arise from the abolition of the Bride-Price hence this custom has been handed down from generation to generation. It is because of the Bride-Price that many women stick to their husbands. If the parents of a woman are poor she will fear to desert the husband because her parents will not be able to refund what they received on her. More to this if payments are not made on women they will be very proud and very disobedient to their husbands for there is nothing binding them.

Many Africans believe that when the Bride-Price is abolished a woman may not be reproductive. She will be bewitched by some of the family members who have not any other source of getting money except by selling out their daughters. To end with I see no reason why after a person has toiled through thick and thin in order to get in a wife should not demand payment on his daughter if he is fortunate to get one.

Reasons for 'Yes': The African is very proud when he has three or four daughters in his house because he has a source from which he gets money whenever he is hard up. Although he is correct since a woman is a creature she should not be sold out for money. The Bride-Price has led many people to steal in order to own wives. Married men are often troubled by their inlaws especially poor ones who drain out their pockets

day in and day out and let them remain in poverty throughout. Poor people who cannot afford money to get in a wife go round messing the country and more to sinning against God. In the beginning when God created Adam and Eve he mentioned nothing about the Bride-Price so I think that the Bride-Price may be abolished as soon as the people understand the real meaning of marriage".

These statements give a clear view of the African Christian standpoint and we think that the position the Church Constitution takes in this connection is adequate for the time being. It is also in agreement with the conclusions in the report of the All-Africa Church Conference where it is said:¹ "The group took exception to the term bride price as inaccurate and misleading. It was felt that the exchange of suitable tokens between the families concerned on the occasion of a marriage had positive social values. However, undesirable elements are introduced when the custom is corrupted in either of the following ways:

- 1) When the parents of a marriageable girl, actuated by mercenary motives, make unreasonable demand upon a suitable young man, or ignore the desires and interests of their daughter by offering her to the highest bidder.
- 2) Where the husband, by virtue of the tokens given to his wife's parents at the time of marriage, regards her as a purchased piece of property and treats her accordingly." The following are statements on how to get married to-day.

1) Ibid. p. 27

I quote three young Cameroonians, all married and all of them church members, on the ways and means of acquiring a wife. They were all asked the question: "In which way does a man get married in this country? Describe the ways in which talks and payments are conducted.

Joseph: "There are three main ways by which a man gets married in this country. These three main ways are as follows:

- (i) If a man sees a girl whom he wants to have in the future as a wife he will approach the girl in private and have a talk with her requesting her as a wife. If the girl is of his opinion then she will tell the man to approach her parents in order to know their minds too.
- (ii) The second way is that when a man loves a girl he will purchase palm wine and ask one of his relatives to accompany him to the parents on one fine evening when they have to arrange the matter.
- (iii) The third way is to marry a secondhand woman who might have left the previous husband or whose previous husband is dead.

Before any payment is made on a woman or on a girl the two parties must first sit down and arrange the matter well. Usually palm wine drinking must be going on. As they drink, they converse on the topic after which they will ask the woman or the girl what her mind is. If she confirms the matter then the wooer will give her wine from his cup to drink. As soon as she drinks the wine all will know that she has faithfully accepted to marry the young man. If she refuses to drink the wine all will know that she is not in favour of marrying the man. Some parents may force her against her wish while others will not since they have received no payment from the man. On the wooer's

return journey his palm wine is payed for if the matter goes bad totally. In case the matter is properly arranged a day will be fixed on which the first payment has to be made. This first payment which is from £50 upwards is paid to the father of the girl who may or may not give anything from it to the other members of the family. From this day it will be made known to all members of the girl's family that Miss X will be married to Mr. XY. in future. All the members will then begin to go to the wooer for their own shares which vary according to their position in the family. The two parties live a reciprocal life while the girl grows. When she is fully grown she is sent to her husband's place. The payment which includes animals such as goats and pigs continues on until the woman is old and finally joins the majority when no more payment is made (i.e. until she dies!)"

Joshua: "In my area (Kumba Town) if a young man sees a girl he loves he woos her and breaks the news of his intention to her. If she approves of being a future wife of yours then you approach the parents of the girl for preliminary discussions.

In the first stage you must produce some bottles of dry Gin or Whisky to have a talk with the girl's parents. These talks usually operate in the evenings when all places become cool and quieter. When the girl's people entertain with confidence your desire, they may call in the girl to find out from her if she would like to admit such a young man as her future husband, and if she agrees, then she takes the wine and offers it to her father to drink. This is her promise.

The second stage is to have a covenant between the two families and this is done by killing a sheep and sharing it into two equal

parts, one part to either family. Petty family requirements are also given by the young man's family.

The third stage is to bring bride-price money in cash. A fat sum of money of about £20 on the spot in addition to a family pig is slaughtered - this must be a very big pig and is solely for the girl's family and nothing goes to the husband's side. This now gives complete claim of the young man over his intended wife.

The fourth stage which is the final one is the period when the girl is brought to her husband's house when she has attained the age of womanhood. Native dances and drinking accompany the procession." Jonathan: "When the bride-price is being discussed the family of the bride also gives Kola (Cola Nuts) which in some cases is drink. A day is fixed for paying the bride-price which may range from £25 to £60. If the bride is a standard six girl (eight years of school) or of higher school education the bride-price soars to £100. Sincere love of the bride to the bridegroom is not considered once the bridegroom can produce the price demanded by the parents of the bride. The mother of the bride has £5 while the father receives, as it may be in some areas £40 or more. After paying the bride-price the girl wife may remain with her mother but her husband may exact her at any time he so desires. Before the girl is removed to her husband's house she does confession before the family of her husband and hers. She is then blessed before a juju (medicine) which is to ward her against witchcraft and which is to make her productive in her husband's house. This done she is handed to her husband's family."

Par. 22. Marriage under Customary Law or under the Ordinance?¹

The Church Constitution² leaves it open whether a marriage takes place under "Native Law and Custom" or

1) The Nigeria Marriage Ordinance.

2) The respective paragraphs read:

Par. 91.

Either or both of the persons intending marriage shall give notice thereof to the Session and the pastor or evangelist of the area in which the parties severally reside, and shall state therein:

- a) The full name, the father's name, the age and the profession of the persons intending marriage.
- b) The dwelling place of each of them.
- c) The time during which each has dwelt there.
- d) The place in which the marriage is to be solemnised.

On receiving such notice the Session shall have it published during Divine Service on three consecutive Sundays in the congregation where the parties severally reside.

Par. 92.

After such publication and signing of an affidavit, if there be no justifiable objection against it, marriages contracted according to Native Law and Custom shall be solemnised by a pastor or evangelist in a Church building, according to the approved liturgy of the Church, before at least part of the congregation and members of both families of bride and bridegroom. Marriage under the Ordinance shall be solemnised by a pastor in a duly licenced Church building before at least two witnesses and according to the approved liturgy of the Church.

under the "Ordinance"¹. This alternative is permitted because up to this present Christians in general have not been ready to take up the responsibilities which a marriage under the Ordinance includes. Some of this underlying factors are illustrated in this two statements which follow.

Daniel: "It is better to marry under native law and custom because it is a system whose implications are clearly understood. The English system is foreign and not adaptable to our situation. It gives some impositions which cannot be workable here such as on a husband's death the wife claims all the husband's property. To use it is absurd and impracticable. By the same English law a husband is only entitled to one wife and this is against our custom. So it is better to marry by native law and custom."

David: "Christian marriage which is strictly monogamous, though English or foreign, has some advantages over pagan marriage. It is based on love between the bridegroom and the bride but it is much influenced by local custom. High bride-price is demanded as in case of pagan marriage. In places where Christianity is well understood² the bride-price is becoming less, pay £12 - £25. This price is paid to the parents of the bride and the marriage, sometimes solemnized in Church or in law court. One or two demerits of marriage in the English or Christian way is the fear that when difficulty in the way of sterility

1) As mentioned before very few marriages are contracted under the Ordinance. Most of the Church members who do so are immigrants from Nigeria and brought up in the Anglican Church.

2) This applies to some parts of Nigeria.

sets in, the husband or wife, being bound by church or court laws, cannot separate. For Africans marry with the aim of having children, and have not the patience of Zacharias and Elizabeth¹ to wait on and on for children. Secondly some male Africans detest English or Christian marriages, for on the event of the death of a husband his wife does not remain the property of the family of the late husband or she may carry away the property of the late husband. So marrying under native laws is preferred to marrying under English laws or Christian rites."

The main difficulty here seems to be the one of inheritance which is convincingly brought out in this second statement. There are two major problems involved in it: the status of the widow and the right of succession.

1. The Status of the Widow.

We remember that according to customary law widows do not inherit from the property of their late husband but are themselves assets in the bulk of the inheritance. This means that they belong to the late husband's family and therefore, according to customary law become wives of the late husband's brothers or other members of his family. Both our informants are aware of the fact that such a state is impossible in a marriage contracted under the Ordinance and therefore reject it. Are they right in doing so? It is,^{as} Arthur Phillips puts it, "fairly generally accepted that a statutory marriage entitles an African woman, in principle, to an enhancement of the legal status and to relief from

1) In this context the two stories; Zachariah - Elizabeth and their son John, (Luke 1. 5 - 25) and Elkanah - Hannah and their son Samuel (1. Samuel 1. 1 - 28) are much discussed.

any customary disabilities or obligations which are incompatible with the ordinary standards of civilized society. In conformity with this principle, it may be stated that the application of the custom of the levirate or 'widow-inheritance' of such a marriage would nowhere be officially countenanced, at any rate in so far as they involve any degree of compulsion".¹ Customary law is based on the idea, that the husband's death does not put an end to the marital relationship. But marriage under the Ordinance frees the widow from any obligation to bear children in her late husband's name. Phillips quotes a case from South Africa in which the position of the widow is made abundantly clear: "A civil marriage is absolutely and completely dissolved by the death of one of the spouses, and when a marriage is thus dissolved the immediate effect is to put an end to all its legal consequences. This court is not prepared to recognise a practice which would encourage the widow of a Christian marriage, for the sake of bearing an heir to her deceased husband, to indulge in illicit intercourse under circumstances repugnant to the moral principles of Christian marriage, and which would perpetuate in certain respects the consequences of a contract which has been absolutely and completely dissolved by her husband's death. It is immaterial for the purposes of this judgement whether the Christian marriage was or was not accompanied by the payment of dowry." It is therefore clear that the status a wife received by marrying under the Ordinance cuts across the traditional kinship system and dissolves it. The widow stands on her own, the late

1) Survey of African Marriage and Family Life; p. 286 - 287.

husband's family has no claim on her. As for her own kin she belongs to the late husband's family, nobody is bound to look after her or to support her. This is the reason why marriage under the Ordinance is so firmly rejected by most Africans in the Cameroons.

2. The Right of Succession.

We have stated that according to customary law the widow does not inherit from the property of her late husband as she herself is an asset in the bulk of the inheritance. Africans are afraid, as we read from both statements of our informants that the widow "may carry away the property of the late husband." Is this fear justified? It seems to us that the legal position, as shown in the exposition on the legal consequences of Statutory Marriage by Arthur Phillips¹ is not universal in Nigeria and is open to wide interpretation which naturally gives rise to confusion. In general it is accepted by Africans that "the non - native law of succession is made applicable to the personal property (and to some extent to real property) of a party to a statutory marriage who dies intestate"². What we said on the status of the widow who was married under the Ordinance naturally also applies to the right of succession, namely that it cuts across the traditional kinship system and dissolves it.

3. The position of the Church.

De jure the Presbyterian Church clearly recognizes a marriage contracted under Native Customary Law as is clearly stated in the constitution of the Church:

par. 92) "marriages contracted according to Native Law and Custom shall be Solemnized by a pastor or evangelist in a Church building, according

1) *ibid.* p. 284 - 286.

2) *ibid* p. xxxvii.

to the approved liturgy of the Church"

par. 93) If persons who were married under Native Customary Law are admitted into the Church they should be encouraged to have their marriage blessed in the Church."

Difficulties often arise after death of the husband. What is going to happen to his widow? This again is a subject much discussed during many synod meetings. According to customary law she becomes the wife of one of the late husband's brothers. In practice this means that quite often a man, also a Christian man, inherits such a widow and by this becomes a polygamist. In the de jure acceptance of a marriage contracted under customary law is also implied the acceptance of the status of a widow and of the right of succession according to this same law. But as the Church does not accept any polygamous relationship, she de facto cannot recognize a marriage contracted under customary law with all its consequences. An example may help in clarifying what we mean: Before a presbyterial synod one Church elder was accused of having two wives. The accused denied the fact and said: "My brother died and I as his next in kin am responsible for his widow. This means that I have to look after her. But I declare before God that I have never known her as my wife. I am married and therefore as a Christian do not want another woman; nevertheless from the point of view of my family I have to cater for her. That is the reason why I took her into my house." And then he added: "but if this my sister-in-law goes astray with some other man, then of course the children she will bear shall belong to me!" This means that even if he himself has no sexual intercourse with this woman he in fact

considers her as his wife! These problems again are not specifically Cameroonian but are universal in Africa. The statement of the All-Africa Conference¹ on the status of the widow is relevant here and to some extent it supports the Church elder's defence quoted above.

"The following practices, widely reported from different parts of the country, must be condemned as unchristian:

- 1) Making no provision for a wife in the event of the husband's death. While the husband clearly has obligations to his parents and to his children, he has at least equal obligations to his wife. These obligations are binding upon him even where the wife is childless.
- 2) Leaving a wife to a male relative as a piece of inheritable property. While customs which require a deceased husband's relatives to provide shelter and maintenance for his widow are commendable, the right to dispose of her person against her will is indefensible on Christian grounds."

Our informant David starts his statement by saying: "Christian marriage which is strictly monogamous, though English or foreign." We realize that there is a confusion about marriage in Church as such and marriage under the Ordinance. In reality there are four different ways of contracting a marriage:

1. Marriage under the Ordinance before the Registrar (District Officer).
2. Marriage under the Ordinance before the Minister in Church,
3. Marriage according to customary law which eo ipso leaves the way to polygamy open and also comprehends the status of the widow and the right of succession in the traditional way.

1) *ibid.* p. 27.

4. What the Church Constitution, to our opinion wrongly, calls marriage according to customary law solemnized in Church which excludes polygamy and as we saw also tends very strongly to change the status of the widow, though this is not written into the Church Constitution. Number 3 and 4 both become binding through the payment of bride-wealth. The Church does not accept illicit marriages unless they are legalized according to Native Customary Law.

Informant Daniel says: "It is better to marry under native law and custom because it is a system whose implications are clearly understood." By this, we think he is speaking the mind of the majority of the Presbyterians in the Cameroons who are confused and therefore reject marriage in Church. That there are even pastors and Church elders who have not understood the fundamentals of a Christian marriage is demonstrated by a contract drawn up in 1956. But first of all it is necessary to explain that according to traditional custom there is a lesser form of "marriage", halfway between disom and diba called esila. This marriage is usually founded on a verbal agreement between the owner of the woman, who is usually a widow, and the man, whereby the latter pays a small sum and makes some donation for a feast to the family. These gifts have nothing to do with marriage payment. The men are usually either immigrants who do not want to settle down permanently, or poor people who cannot afford to pay much. While the children belong to the wife's family, she herself cannot be recalled as long as the man fulfils his obligations. Should he return to his homeland, however, the wife automatically reverts to her former owner. A contract detailing these particulars was put in writing and witnessed by six church elders and one pastor. It ran as follows:

MARRIAGE CONTRACT

I, Efiong A. Utin has this day 14th July 1956 promised to marry from Mr. Daniel N. Mokondo his daughter Mallah of do.

Presently I paid nothing on her.

During this Contract I have to maintain her with all possible maintainance regarding sick etc.

Should in case I leave her and ready to go home,

I have to dash her¹ for all her services she rendered to me.

The following Church Elders were present during the Contract.

Signed by: Daniel Nganda
E. Kesse
Erna Ngobitong
Rev. E. Petha
Evan. Filipo Nwaha
Abel Som
Elisabeth Pemea

It is clear, that these Church elders should never have allowed such a marriage. By their agreement to it they show a complete lack of understanding of what a Christian marriage should be. We think that time has come for the introduction of a clearer conception of Christian marriage in the Cameroons. We appreciate the reluctance of the missionaries who did not simply want to superimpose a western form of marriage, and who were waiting for

1) To dash her means to compensate her for the services she rendered to her "husband".

the Africans to find their own form. But it is high time that the Church should take up this responsibility and clarify the position.

Par. 23.

The Conflict with Polygamy.

Cameroonian customary law, like African customary law in general¹, recognizes that a man may legally have more wives than one, and prescribes no limit to their number. The Church however, does not approve of polygamous marriages though it grants membership to women in such marriages². Before we discuss this problem further, let us hear what three African Christians have to say about why so many Christians are falling back into polygamy.

Abraham "Long before Christianity was brought into this country it had been the African custom to marry more than one wife for it was believed that any polygamist is a man of dignity and a man of wealth. It was also believed and still is believed that those who are unable to get many wives are poor and usually are looked down upon as a low class of people. When Christianity came with the Christian law that a Christian should have but one wife many people blindly became members with the hope to see the coming of the Lord as soon as possible. As they have waited for many years and the Lord does not come according to their expectation they change their minds and become polygamists for it seems they are wasting their time instead of enjoying the facilities that non-Christians are enjoying."

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- 1) A. Phillips: Survey of African Marriage and Family Life.
 - 2) The Church Constitution reads: par. 87 "The Church disapproves of polygamous marriage, and therefore cannot accept any polygamist as a member of the Church, though realising that this brings hardship on many, particularly on those who married several wives before coming into contact with the Gospel. It however grants membership to women who under the pressure of the present social and economic structure of the country are forced to live in such polygamous unions."

In a summary Abraham puts the following points together:

1. They have waited for the coming of the Lord and it seems that he will not come.
2. Many are mocked at by polygamists hence they resolve to become polygamists too.
3. Some with only one wife have no children and in order to have children they take additional wives.
4. Many say that though King Solomon, David and others were polygamists, yet God loved them.
5. The others say that monogamy is a European custom because in Europe life is hard and a person finds it difficult to maintain many wives.

Adam: "Lack of faith in their wives. Dissatisfaction caused perpetually by a wife's behaviour may engineer a husband to bring in a second wife to begin a polygamous life. When love and sympathy are expelled from a marriage the husband is tempted to go in for another one who may give better results. If a husband who is a Christian fails to get a permission to divorce a wife who is a thick thorn in his flesh, his mind would be biased against the church and may bolt away by force to satisfy his desires. The last but not the least is lack of issues after a long expectation and a burning desire to leave issues may compel a person to become a polygamist to seek his luck. A serious sickness may attack a wife and for the family's upkeep a second wife may be necessary and if the Church fails to grant it the person is forced to fall back and satisfy his intentions thereby becoming a polygamist."

Albert: "When a lady married under christian law does be unfruitful her husband is displeased. The two have quarrels incessantly. The family of the husband encourages the husband to divorce his wife. As the Church won't allow separation in such a case the husband marries a second wife. Secondly if the married lady makes herself a nuisance in a community, (i.e. is promiscuous) which may be the main cause of her barrenness, the husband is forced to have no affection for his wife, and so marries another woman who, it is believed, will be of good behaviour and will be fruitful. In some very rare cases a husband can become polygamous when his wife is not serviceable or respectful and the church without a proper insight of the situation, backs up the lady, his wife.".

From these three statements we can see the main points why it is so hard for Africans to give up polygamy. Abraham says that "any polygamist is a man of dignity and a man of wealth". We remember that a man's importance in the village community grows with every step upwards he takes in life. Three of the main steps in a man's life, as mentioned before, are 1. marriage, 2. becoming a father, and 3. each new wife whom he marries. All of these three steps have a direct bearing on our problem. Let us not forget that according to traditional belief a man's position on earth influences his position in the village of the dead. The greatest temptation for a Christian comes when his wife is barren. It is not astonishing that this was mentioned by every one of the three informants.

Abraham: "Some with only a wife have no children and in order that perhaps they may have children have become polygamists, "Adam: "The

last but not the least is lack of issues after a long expectation and a burning desire to live issues may compel a person to become a polygamist to seek his luck;" Albert: "When a lady married under Christian law does be unfruitful her husband is displeased." Birth of children in general and of boys in particular is of great importance because through the son and heir the all important continuity of the lineage is assured. We knew of only a few cases of childless couples who remained monogamously married.

The major problem, we maintain, is one that neither of our informants mentioned. In the Cameroons, as in most African tribes a baby is usually breast fed up to the age of three years. The mother must not become pregnant again before the child is weaned. The breaking of this taboo, even to-day, is by most people, Christians and Pagans, regarded as shameful. We heard more than one African making nasty remarks about European couples who did not stick to this "their rule". In practice this means that a husband with one wife only has to abstain from sexual intercourse for two to three years each time she conceives! Often the wife goes with the baby to stay with her relatives for one year or more. A polygamist during this time is looked after by his other wife or wives, whereas the man with one wife only is left on his own. This enforced abstinence leads to wide-spread promiscuity on the part of the men and is one of the reasons why they seek relief in polygamy.

We may now ask how this situation may be changed. The long period of lactation arises principally from the fact that early weaning usually results in this child's being under-nourished as in areas of tropical forest there is no adequate diet for very small children.

Milking of goats is unknown and breeding of cattle for milk impossible because of the tsetse fly. But even if there was milk available, as in the higher parts of the country, the feeding of babies with milk in a tropical climate with all its possibilities of infection entails the observance of so many rules of hygiene that it would take a long time to introduce it safely. The common woman most often misunderstands the European rules of hygiene as "their way of superstition". One great help which must also be provided is the introduction of some acceptable means of birth control. The Report of the All-Africa Church Conference has under the heading "practices the Church should discourage"¹ two paragraphs on our subject which show us how much these difficulties are universal in Africa, and how much we must find ways and means together to overcome them. We quote: "The practice of suckling children for as long as two or three years may have its merits where early weaning might result in malnutrition; and sexual taboo widely practised during this period has safeguarded the woman from the strain of excessive child-bearing. However, there is much evidence that the prolonged period of enforced abstinence leads to wide-spread promiscuity on the part of the husband, and is a major instrument used to justify polygamy. It is contrary to Scripture (1 Corinthians 7, 5), and the group suggests that the Christian Church might consider advocating the continuance of normal marital relations with the use of some acceptable means of birth control."

The following is the conference's opinion on polygamy in general and we shall see that it comes very near to the position taken up by Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons in its Church Constitution.

1) *ibid* p. 27 - 28.

"The group considers polygamy to be contrary to the Christian ideal of marriage and damaging to the Christian conception of womanhood. It is suggested, however, that some church disciplinary practices in dealing with polygamy may need careful re-examination, in order that the rigorous application of Christian standards should not cut off from Christian fellowship members of polygamous families who are sincere seekers."

There are two main agents working against polygamy from outside the Church. One is the constant raising of the standard of living. If our informant Abraham says, that "monogamy is a European custom because in Europe Life is hard and a person finds it difficult to maintain many wives", then he, a man who has never been to Europe, is simply projecting the economic difficulties of the younger generation of Africans back on to Europe. In fact it is so that the average African living outside his tribal bonds finds it extremely difficult to maintain more than one wife. The other agent is the increasing number of educated women. We remember that traditionally there existed an exact division between man's work and woman's and that formerly each group was organised in secret societies. By this the solidarity of woman to woman and of man to man was stronger than the bond between husband and wife. It was like two circles which overlapped in one place only; namely the procreation of a new generation. Naturally the younger, educated woman does expect more from her life together with her husband and therefore also marriage becomes more exclusive; in practice this means that there is no room left for a second wife.¹

1) J.V. Taylor, writing about "the Uganda Church to-day" comes to the same conclusion: "A high proportion of Christians have failed to maintain a monogamous household for more than a few years, and complete marital breakdown is common. At the same time, monogamy has succeeded in becoming the ideal albeit a social rather than a spiritual ideal". p. 140.

Par. 24.The peculiar difficulties in Matrilineal Tribes.

The tribes described in this thesis are in general patrilineal with the exception of the Mbonge, Barue and the Balundu tribe in Kumba Division which are matrilineal but patrilocal. We shall now demonstrate on some examples from the Barue tribe the peculiar difficulties concerning marriage and family life in matrilineal society. The Barue tribe is matrilineal and patrilocal. This means that they reckon their descent through the mother's lineage and that the mother and her offsprings form part of her lineage although they live in the father's village.

The Barue tribe consists of three fairly large clans called the Bakutali, Baleka and Bonyali.¹ These clans are not separated geographically and all three clans may be represented in a single village. In any marriage the children take the mother's lineage, and the father's goods and property on his death will pass to his sister's children and not to his 'own' by a wife of another clan or lineage. The function of marriage payment in patrilineal society is to compensate the lineage for the loss of a worker and a potential child - bearer. In matrilineal society there is no loss to the lineage, and therefore marriage payment in the above mentioned sense is meaningless. At marriage a 'dash',² was usually given to the father who brought the girl up but otherwise it was the business of the 'father' and his lineage to be responsible for the contracting of the marriage. To-day things have become more complicated. Marriage payment is losing its original meaning and more and more becomes the commercial interest of

1) See table No. 9.

2) Some sort of compensation.

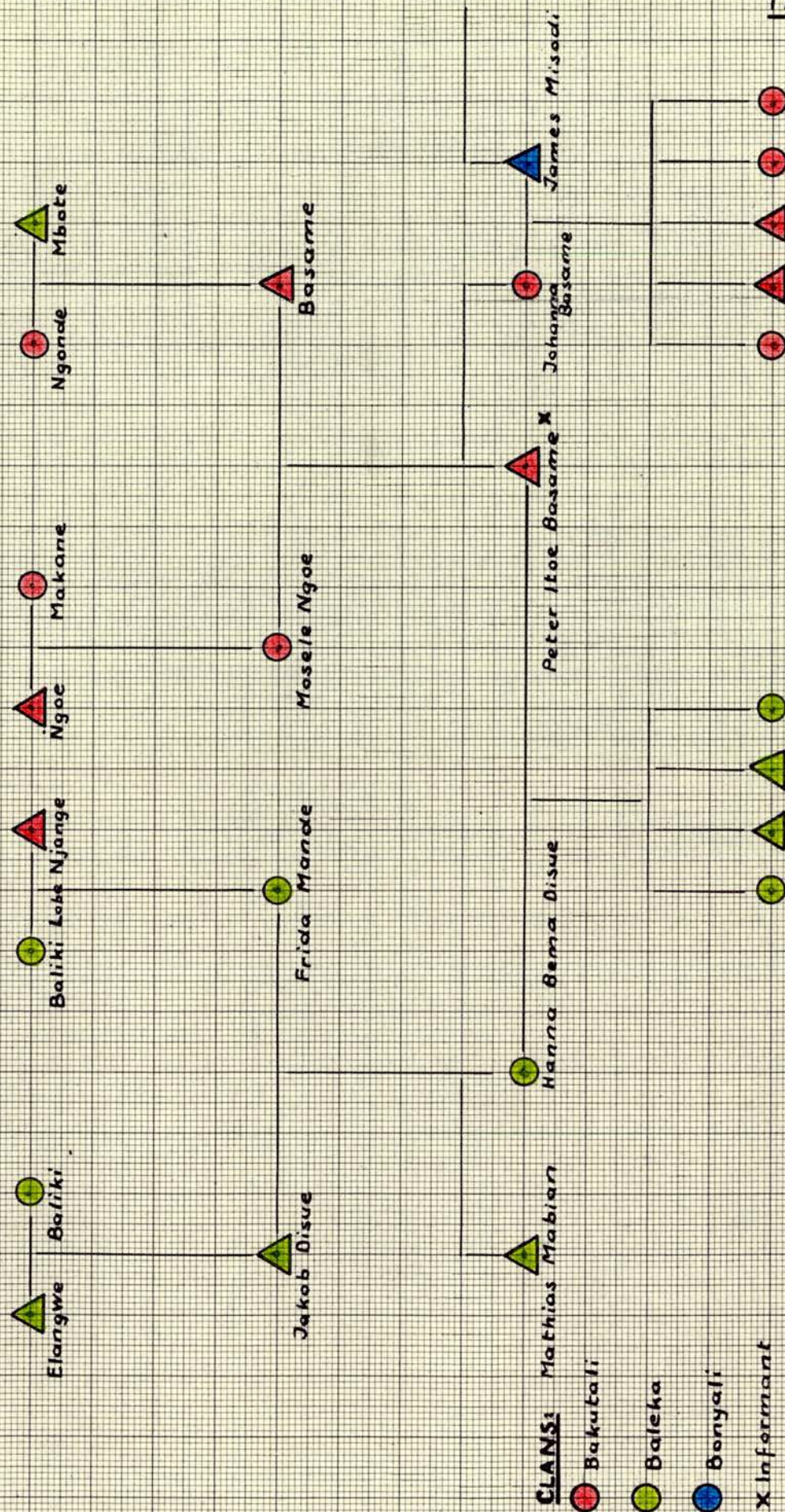


TABLE 10

EXAMPLE OF INTERMARRIAGE AMONG THE BARUE CLANS

(MATRILINEAL)

an individual father.¹ If formerly the father was given a dash of about 5 pounds value to-day the marriage payment up to £30 - £40 may be paid to him. He seems to be claiming this amount as a compensation for his share in the upbringing of the daughter. As it is the father and not the mother's brother who is receiving the payment there is plenty of disagreement among the different lineages and a general uncertainty as to who really exercises authority over the children.² The example of Basame's family may help in clarifying the problem (see table No. 9.). Peter Itoe Basame has four children with his wife Hanna Bema Disue. In case of death Peter's property (his farm, gramophone, bicycle, clothes and his money) goes to the children his sister Johanna Basame had with James Misodi, whereas the property of his wife Hanna (bicycle, sewing machine, clothes and her money) goes to her own children. Now Peter Basame is supposed to pay the school fees for the children of Johanna Basame and James Misodi, and Mathias Mabian, Hanna's brother to pay the school fees of his own children. As it happens Mathias Mabian refuses to pay, so that Peter Basame is paying the fees both for his own children and for the children of his sister. His conclusion is: "why should I not claim compensation from the future husbands of my own and of Johanna's children?" One result of this situation is that the enrolment in the schools of this

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- 1) In this respect surely the surrounding patrilineal tribes have had their influence on the Barue.
 - 2) In a matrilineal society a man's heirs are his sister's children, not his own. Children are subject to the authority of the mother's brother as the representative of the lineage of which they are members. Thus the mother's brother exercises many of the functions which the European regards as belonging to the father. We might therefore expect some of the marriage payment to be given to his mother's brother.

area is always very low because many men take advantage of the contradiction between matrilineal tradition and the modern tendency to emphasize the elementary family at the expense of the lineage which increases the father's obligations; they play one against the other and accept responsibility for the education of neither their own children nor their sister's. The only way out of this difficulty, we found, is to abolish fee paying by individuals and instead to assess the whole community.

Marriage bonds among these matrilineal tribes are easily broken. As no marriage payment is to be returned in the event of a wife leaving her husband, it happens that for relatively minor reasons the woman runs away and returns to her mother's home taking the children with her. When the author was holding the annual theological refresher course of the Dikume Presbytery in 1957¹, one Sunday afternoon he went for a walk through the town of Dikume. When passing near one big house he heard a lot of noise of people shouting at each other, as Barue people often do when they discuss something. On entering the house the author met a mixed crowd of Church elders, catechists, evangelists, pastors and school teachers discussing the fact that marriages were so easily broken among their own tribes. The reason for this they stated was because descent in their tribes is traced on the mother's side and not on the father's as in the great majority of the surrounding tribes. Marriage payment is very low and does not give a hold on the wife and her children by the father or his lineage. The result of this is that women who are displeased with their husbands easily leave him and run

1) Most of the matrilineal tribes are in the Dikume Presbytery.

back to their mother's house. Moreover the father has no authority over the children and the family relationship is therefore a very loose one. The author asked them why they did not change this their marriage custom, as everybody seemed to agree that it did not work any more, and try instead to build up a stronger family life centred around father and mother who would then take full responsibility for the welfare of the children. They all agreed that this would be a good thing to do. But the result of a long discussion was that this change could not be performed because they were afraid that the ancestors would resent such a change and their women would become barren.

We think that only a deeper understanding of what Christian marriage and Christian responsibility for the upbringing of children is can bring any real help to these tribes.

Par. 25.

The Parents and their Children.

Many of the difficulties created by the rapid social changes in the Cameroons have readily observable consequences for parent - child relations. Traditionally the children were brought up and educated in the family and inside the bonds of their lineage. This education was directed to preparing the young people for membership in the community. Children learned by imitating the people about them and by listening to the stories and tales related by old men and women. In this way they became gradually initiated into the history and wisdom of their lineage and tribe. Thus also reverence for the old people was built up and the younger ones naturally took up their own place in society. With the introduction of schools this natural growing into the society was interrupted and disturbed. The Basel Mission and to-day the Presbyterian Church have always been aware of this problem and

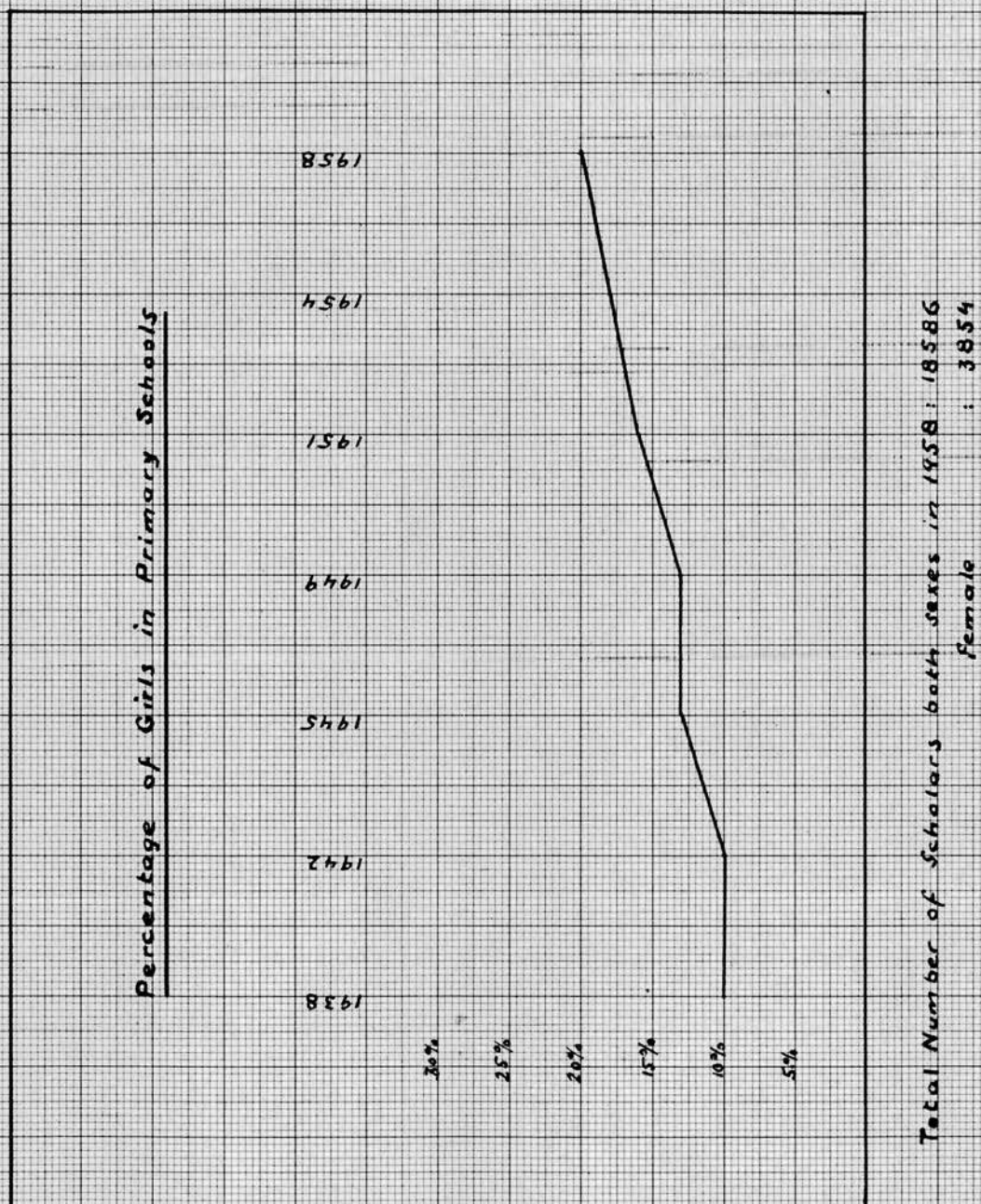
have therefore tried to build up their schools as centres of positively Christian education¹. Through the schools a new, Christian, ideal of family relationship, of reverence for the aged, of responsibility for the community, has to be implanted into the children. In practice this raises one great difficulty. Responsible school teachers constantly complain about the lack of co-operation from the parents' side. It might be objected that teachers in Europe have the same complaints, which to some extent is true, but there is a fundamental difference. Whereas there is often only a slight difference, if any, between the background provided by home life and the teaching in school in Europe, in the Cameroons these are two different worlds. Therefore as long as there is no real co-operation between parents and school teacher the child has great difficulty in developing an organic understanding of its every - day life and of the community it lives in. It should therefore be the task of the Church authorities to help in deepening the understanding of the school's function among the Christian congregations. But at this point we come against another difficulty. There is very little understanding and sympathy for each others' work between the catechist, evangelists, and pastors on the one side and the school teachers on the other. A problem we shall look into later on.

There are other problems evolving out of this rapid social change situation. We have seen how much marriage payment has become commercialised. And we also mentioned above that the amount to be paid as marriage payment may vary according to the girl's educational

1) We remember point 2. of the Mission's petition to the German Government of 1886: "Through Christian Schools the society seeks to teach those committed to her care to read the holy scriptures and to build up Christian education in general."

background. Parents mostly think of the school fees they pay for their children as a kind of an investment which they expect to come back to them with interest. Nearly every wage earning Cameroonian is exploited by his family. As the higher wages usually go together with higher education, young teachers, clerks and also craftsmen etc. are constantly invaded by members of their family demanding help. For this same reason such young people usually do not like to be posted to or near their home town. In the same way their position as teachers, clerks or whatever they may be is likely to be exploited by their family and it is no over-statement to say that many young men have gone to prison for an offence committed under pressure from their family. Girls' education¹ still encounters much opposition. A girl is not sent to school for primary education in order to become a better housewife but to go in for further training. Up to now there have been only three main ways for a girl to go on with her education: either she goes to secondary school, to a teachers' training centre or she may try to become a nurse. But opportunities for the girls are relatively few and parents are constantly complaining about the money they have spent for their girls elementary education which, as they think, is of no use to them. This misunderstanding of the function of school education is a great impediment to education in general and girl's education in particular. In rural areas there are schools in which we may meet no more than 3 - 4 girls in a class of 40 scholars. It is also in those areas that we find that the strongest argument against girls education is that educated girls are lost for the simple life in their area because they are usually no longer willing to share the

1) See table No. 10.

TABLE 10.

living conditions of a common village woman.

There are areas where the generation of men between 15 and 30 is almost entirely away from their home town working in the plantations. Often they return home only once a year over Christmas. But they still consider their home town as their home and the majority of them leave their wives behind. The children usually stay with their mother up to school age, when many of the boys leave their homes to stay with the father or some relatives in one of the urban centres where they stay as servants and go to school. It is clear that these children grow up in a very unhealthy climate dangerous to their development.

CHAPTER 6.

The Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons

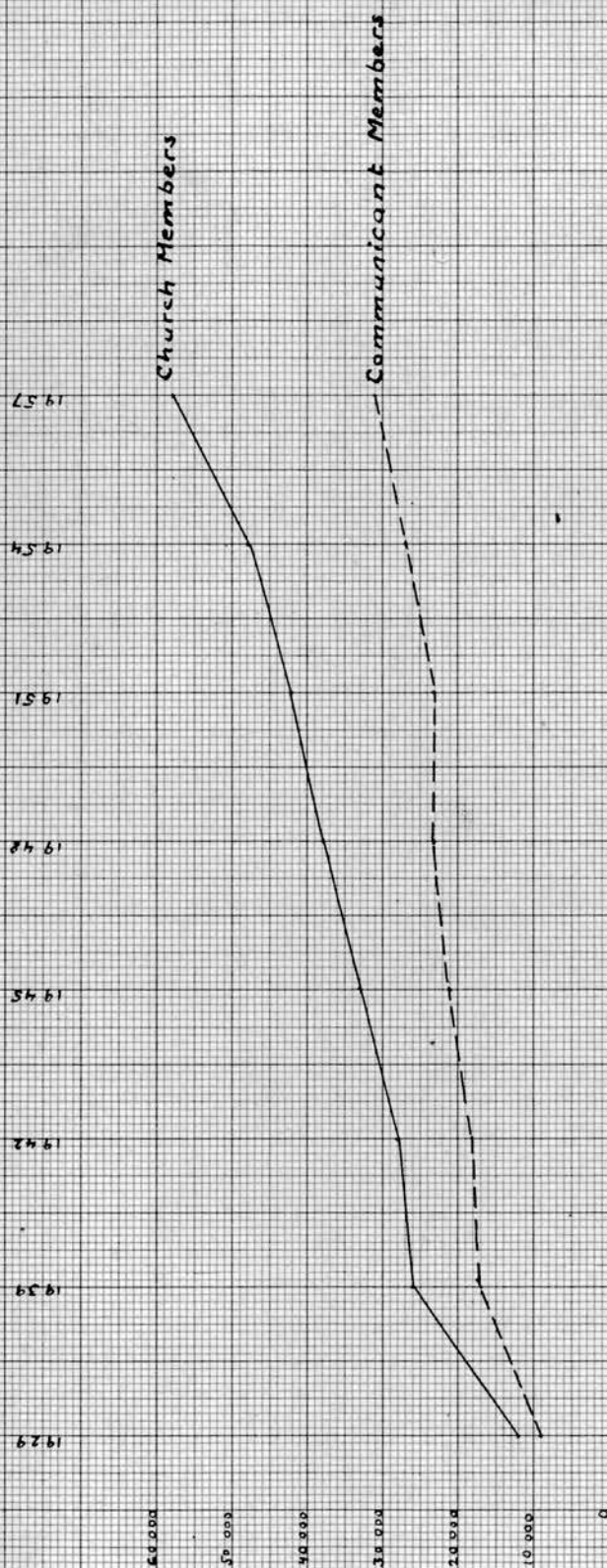
Par. 26 Introduction

In 1957 the General Synod of the Basel Mission Church in the Cameroons voted for its new constitution and by this became an independent Church under the name of the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons. By this, Point One of the original "Petition of the Evangelical Missionary Society in Basel" (namely that "to the exclusion of any political aims the society has as its goal the planting of Evangelical Christianity among the Heathen and the assembling of the converts into Christian Congregations") was more than achieved. Not only were there Christian Congregations all over the country, but Church government and the financial position of the Church had developed to such extent that it was time for the Missionary Society to hand over such as it could. The schools still bear the name of the Basel Mission, but as the constitution says (Par. 73) the Church "will in due course assume full responsibility for the schools now under the proprietorship of the Basel Mission". The ordained missionaries became pastors of the Church in the same way as their African colleagues with the exception that the Mission is still responsible for their livelihood.

The expansion of the Church during the last twenty years has been a rapid one, the number of Church members going from 12'463 in 1929 up to over 60'000 in 1958.¹ (These figures apply to the whole Church and not to the Forest Area only) The same applies to the growing number of

1) Table 11

TABLE II.



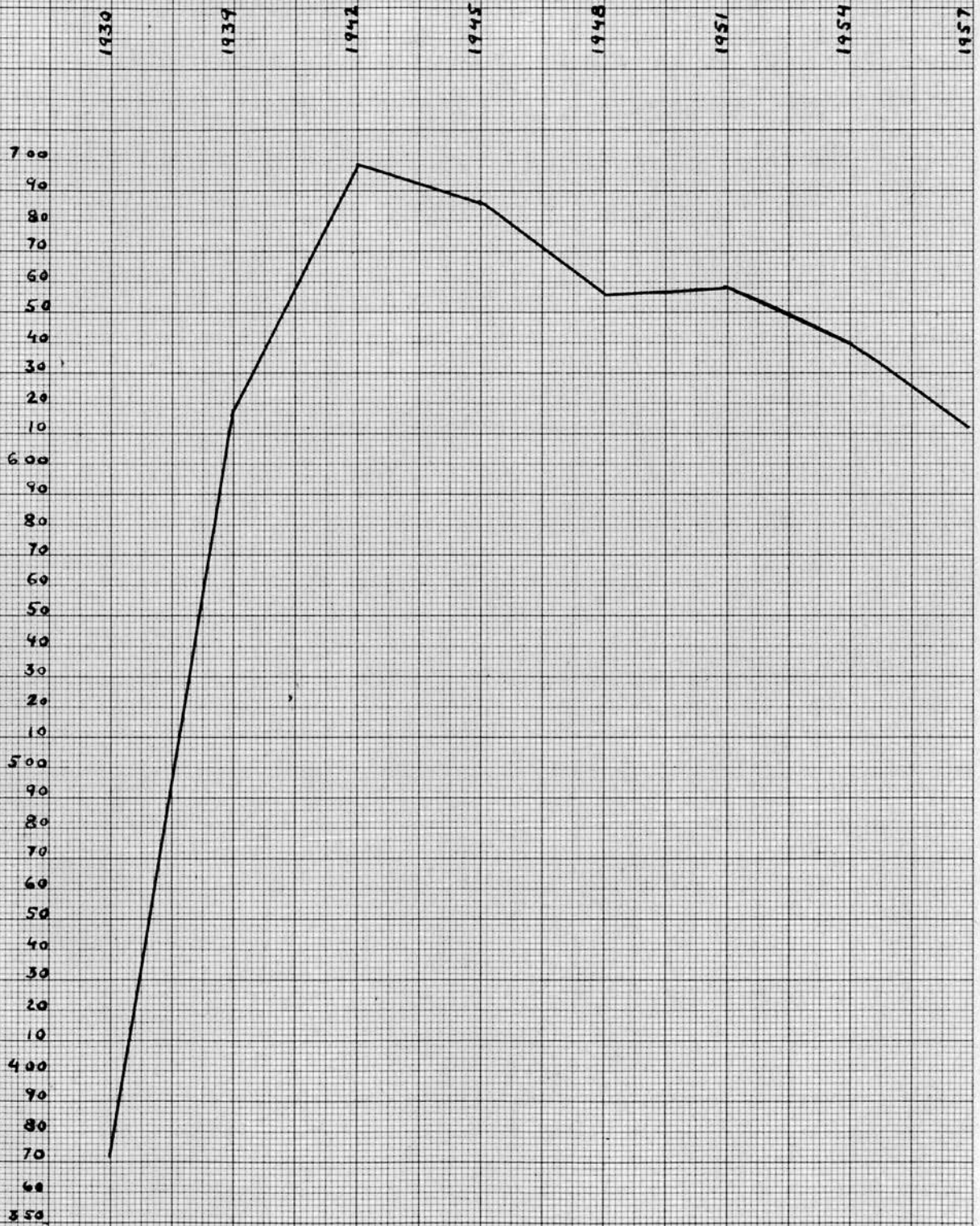
Comparative Table of Church Members 1929 - 1957

1929:	12,463	—	9,049	----
1957:	58,428		31,035	

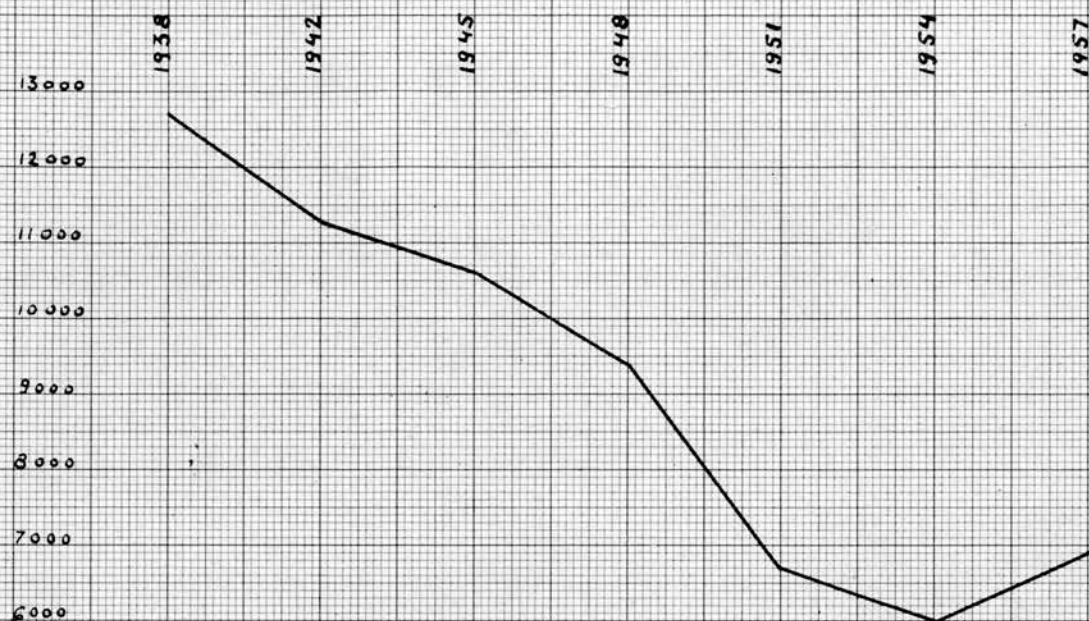
congregations from 374 in 1930 to 614 in 1957.¹ The decreasing number of congregations since 1942 is due to the continual decline since 1938 in the number of catechists.² The number of catechumen, i.e., those who come for baptism instruction as adults, has decreased from 12'700 in 1938 to 6'900 in 1957,³ but the total number of those baptised has increased from 3'009 in 1938 to 6'221 in 1957 which shows; there is also a great increase in infant baptism against adult baptism during this period.⁴

We shall in the following paragraphs show and discuss some of the problems the Church is encountering in her new form. And it will be of great interest to investigate the bearing of some of the facts related in the previous chapters on this Church. It took several years until the present Church Constitution was accepted by the General Synod. The Synod had appointed a Committee to draw up a Constitution. The first draft was submitted to Prof. Kraemer at Bossey, Prof. Dürer in Bern and Prof. Torrance in Edinburgh for comments. After this the draft was reworked and this time presented to the Congregations for their comments. The author was at that time the secretary of the Kumba Presbytery and therefore in charge of organising a committee in the Presbytery which was to bring in the comments of each Congregation. We shall therefore be able to bring into the following paragraph on the Church Constitution some of their views and arguments. After the amendments suggested by

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- 1) Table 12.
 - 2) Table 16.
 - 3) Table 13.
 - 4) Table 14.

TABLE 12

Comparative Table of No. of
Congregations

TABLE 13.Number of Catechumen in each year from 1938 - 1957TABLE 14.Comparative Table of Adult and Infant Baptism

the various Presbyteries had been worked into the draft it was finally brought before the General Synod which accepted it in 1957. The previous "Constitution of the Basel Mission Church"¹ of 1935 was in its main parts based on the "Constitution of the Basel Mission Church on the Gold Coast"² of 1902. The latter had as its basis the "Constitution for the Evangelical Congregations of the Basel Mission in East India and West Africa"³ of 1865⁴. In the following we give an outline of the Constitution of 1957 which will give us some idea about the way it is built up:

Introduction

Part One

The Basic Principles of the Church

Part Two

The Organisation of the Church

Structure and Order of the Church

1. The Local Congregation

The Appointment of Elders

Special Duties of Elders

The Ordained and Unordained Ministry

11. The Controlling Bodies

The Congregational Meeting

The Session

The Presbytery

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- 1) Betesedi ba Mwemba m'ewangelisi m'ebas' a Basel o Kamerun.
 - 2) Ordnung für die evangelischen Gemeinden der Basler Mission auf der Goldküste.
 - 3) Ordnung für die evangelischen Gemeinden der Basler Mission in Ostindien und Westafrika.
 - 4) E. Kellerhals: Gemeindebildung und Kirchenordnung in Kamerun; E.M.M. 1936, p. 68 - 81.

The Presbyterial Synods

The Presbyterial Synod Committee

The District

The District Synod

The District Synod Committee

The Church as a whole

The General Synod

The General Synod Committee

111. The Relationship between the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons and the Evangelical Missionary Society in Basel. (Basel Mission).

Part Three

Worship and Life of the Church

1. The Worship of the Church
11. The Discipline of the Church
111. Marriage in the Church
- IV. The Finance of the Church

The Treasury of the Local Congregation

The Treasury of the Presbytery

The District Treasury

The General Church Treasury

The Constitution was adopted by the General Synod on the 13th November 1957 and will be provisionally in force for a period of three years during which time recommendations for amendments may be forwarded to the Secretary of the General Synod (Par. 107).

Par. 27. The Constitution of the Church

1. Church and Mission

The Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons grew out of the work of the Basel Mission in the Cameroons. The Church Constitution acknowledges this in its introduction, saying: "The Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons is in historical continuity with the Basel Mission of the Cameroons. It has come into being through the work of the Evangelical Missionary Society in Basel". But this relationship between Church and Missionary Society is not only historical, but a continuing bond in that the Missionary Society is still sending staff for the Church and the different institutions such as Training Centres, Hospitals and Maternity Home of which the Society is still in charge. Therefore there had to be some formal procedure by which the Church could approach the Home Board in Basel and vice versa. This procedure is laid down in par. 71. which reads: "The Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons still needs the help and support of the Basel Mission, particularly as regards the appointment and maintenance of non-African staff. Close contact between the Church and the Home Board of the Basel Mission must therefore be maintained and shall be effected as follows:

- a) The Church's business with the Home Board of the Basel Mission is to be done through the General Synod Committee whose Chairman and Secretary are responsible for the respective correspondence.
- b) The Mission's official representative in the Cameroons is the Field Secretary."

On this point arose a long discussion about the right of the Field Secretary to have his own correspondence with the home board over matters the General Synod Committee wants its Secretary and Chairman to correspond with the home board. There was a strong feeling that the Field Secretary is a kind of an inspector reporting to Basel; which in other words meant that the Mission does not trust the Church Leaders. These ill feelings against the Field Secretary of the Mission are not a Cameroonian peculiarity. A man like D.T. Niles¹ could say at a course for missionaries and pastors held at Bossey in 1959: "get rid of your Field Secretaries!", "if you don't trust us to look after the Missionaries you are sending out to us, then don't send them!" As long as the Missionary Society is the proprietor of several branches of work it is bound to have a representative on the field, looking after its various interests and holding the power of attorney. But we realise how strong the feelings against any form of tutelage and paternalism are.

The same reactions come up between younger and better educated Cameroonian Pastors and young non-African pastors (Missionaries). The missionary, even if he is not a national of the Colonial Government, is as a European eo ipso identified with the ruling power. The younger African resents this "natural" authority of the young "white man" even if the young missionary does his best not to be authoritative. This sensitiveness on the part of the African, even if we understand it, in some cases is apt to create a bad climate for

1) Dr. D.T. Niles is the Secretary of the East Asia Conference of the World Council of Churches.

co-operation between "black" and "white" in Church work. The older missionary usually comes less into conflict with such feelings as Africans pay him the respect due to his age.

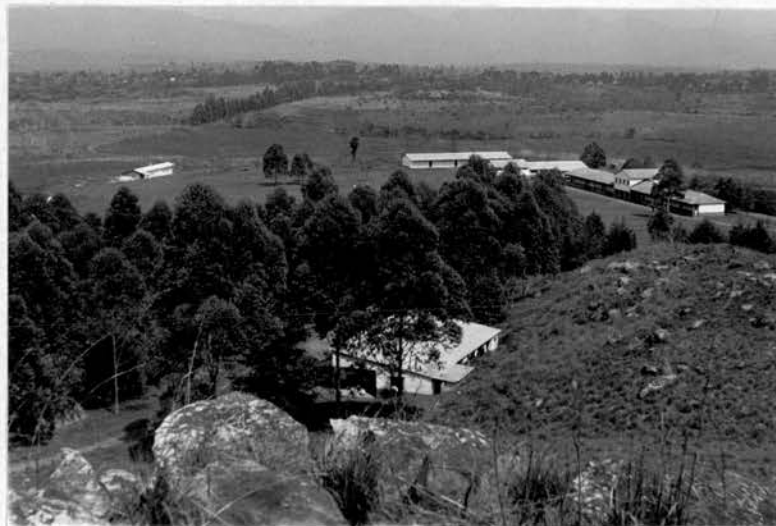
Financially the Church is self-supporting, apart from the annual grant of the Missionary Society towards the expenditures of the Catechist Seminary, the Theological School at Nyasoso, the Marriage Training Centre at Bafut and to the Scholarship Fund for theological studies abroad.

The European staff provided by the Mission in 1959 is distributed in the following institutions and stations:

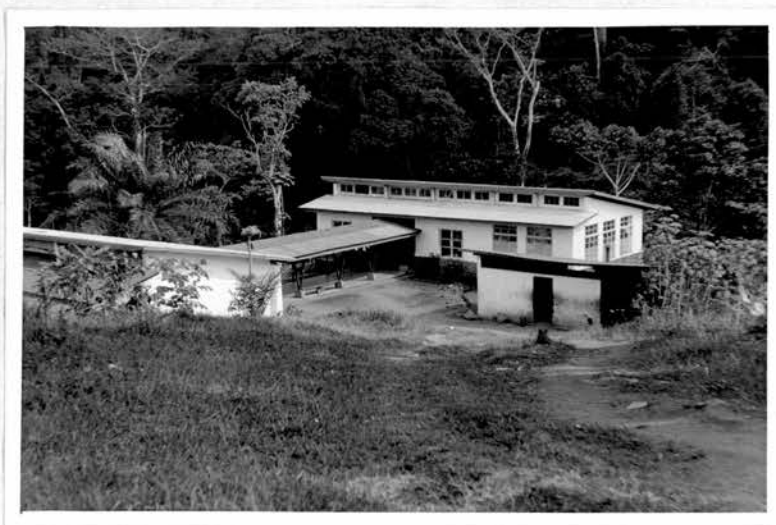
Victoria	Presbytery of Victoria	1 Minister
	Basel Mission Bookshops	1 Manager
	Treasury and Printing Press	1 Manager
	Women's Work	1 Sister
	Buildings	1 Engineer
Buea	Field Secretary	1 Minister
	Youth Work of the Church	1 Minister
	Supervisor of Schools	1 Teacher
Kumba	Presbytery of Kumba	1 Minister
Nyasoso	Presbytery of Nyasoso	1 Minister
	Theological School	1 Minister
	Catechist Training Centre	1 Minister
	Maternity and Dispensary	1 Sister
Manyemen	Leprosy Settlement	1 Medical Officer
		3 Sisters
		1 Manager (by BLRA)



8. Teacher Training Centre Batibo



9. Secondary School Bali



10. Operating Theatre at Manyemen Leprosy Settlement,
Kumba



11. Lecture Rooms and Dining Hall at the Theological
Training Centre and Catechist Seminary, Nyasoso, Kumba

Fotabe	Presbytery of Mamfe	1 Minister
	Women's Work	1 Sister
Besongabang	Presbytery of Mamfe	1 Minister
	Schools	1 Administrator
Batibo	Teacher Training Centre	2 Teachers
Bali	Secondary School	5 Teachers
Bafut	Presbytery of Bafut	1 Minister
	Maternity and Dispensary	2 Sisters
	Marriage Training Centre	1 Teacher
		1 Sister
	Girl's School	2 Teachers
Bamenda	Presbytery of Bamenda	1 Minister
Mbengwi	Presbytery of Mbengwi	1 Minister
We	Presbytery of We	1 Minister
Kishong	Presbytery of Kishong	1 Minister

2. The Structure of the Church.

The Presbyterian Church has, as its name says, a Presbyterian form of Church Government adapted to the geographical and ethnic position of the Southern Cameroons. The whole country is about 240 miles long and at its widest not more than a 100 miles. As the one main road leading through is in bad condition means of travelling and communication are also bad. The Grassland is high up whereas the Forest area is lowland. It is a well known fact that the temper of people living in rough and mountainous countries differs from people living in hot and damp lowland. These two factors made up for a natural division into two Church Districts. The Forest District, with which we are concerned is divided into

three political Divisions which by the Church were subdivided into 6 Presbyteries¹.

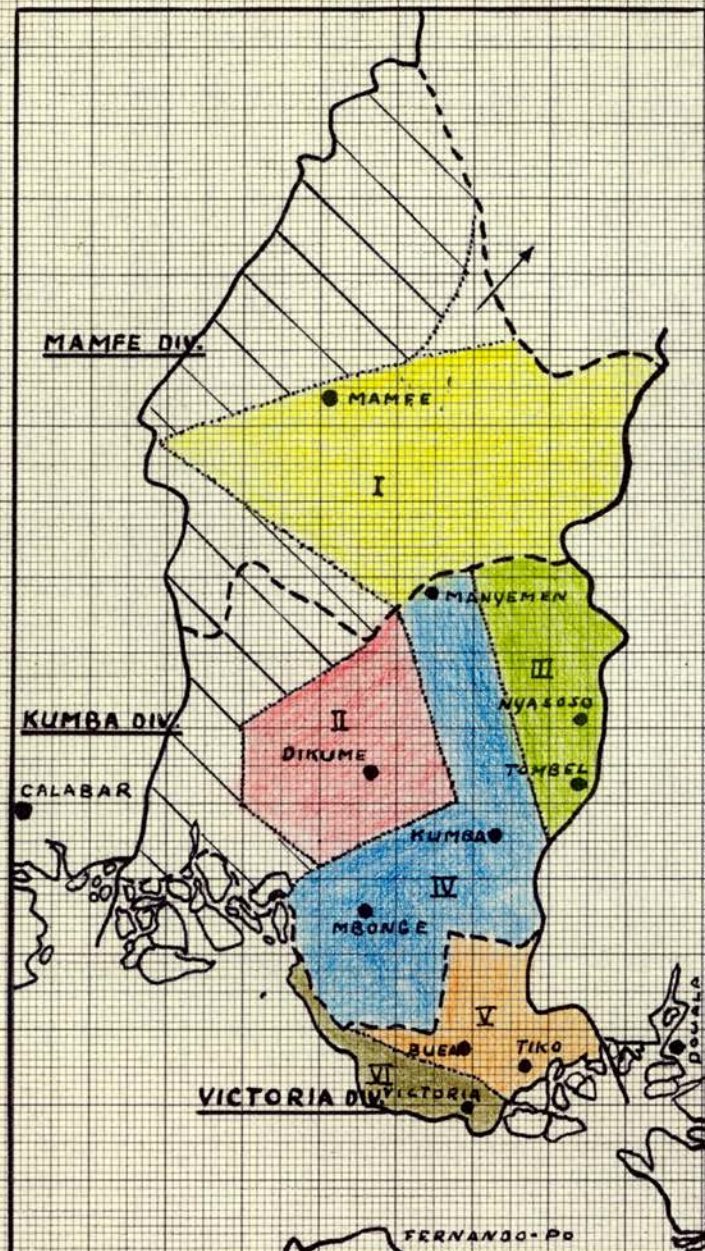
The basis of the whole structure of the Church are the local Congregations. "Membership of the local congregation consists of those who in faith have been baptised with water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, who partake of the Lord's Supper and submit to the discipline of the Church".² According to the Constitution³ all communicant Members of the local congregation meet at least once a quarter in the Congregational Meeting which is presided over by an elder assisted by the responsible ministers (catechist, evangelist or pastor). The concern of the Congregational Meeting is the deepening of the spiritual life of the Congregation, the spreading of the Gospel beyond its immediate limits, the erecting and maintaining of all Congregational buildings, the laying out and maintaining of Congregational farms to help the Congregation financially, and further the laying out and maintaining of cemeteries, and the appointment of a subcommittee dealing with the finance of the Congregation. As executive body of the Congregational Meeting there is the Session⁴. Its membership consists of the duly elected elders⁵, the catechist of the Congregation and other ministers entrusted with

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- 1) See Map. 3.
 2) Constitution: par. 1.
 3) " par. 22 - 23.
 4) ibid: par. 24 - 30.
 5) Number of elders according to the size of the Congregation (par.9)

1	elder	for	6	-	10	Christians
2	elders	"	11	-	50	"
3	"	"	51	-	100	"
4	"	"	101	-	200	"
5	"	"	201	-	350	"
6	"	"	351	-	500	"
7	"	"	more than		500	"

MAP 3.

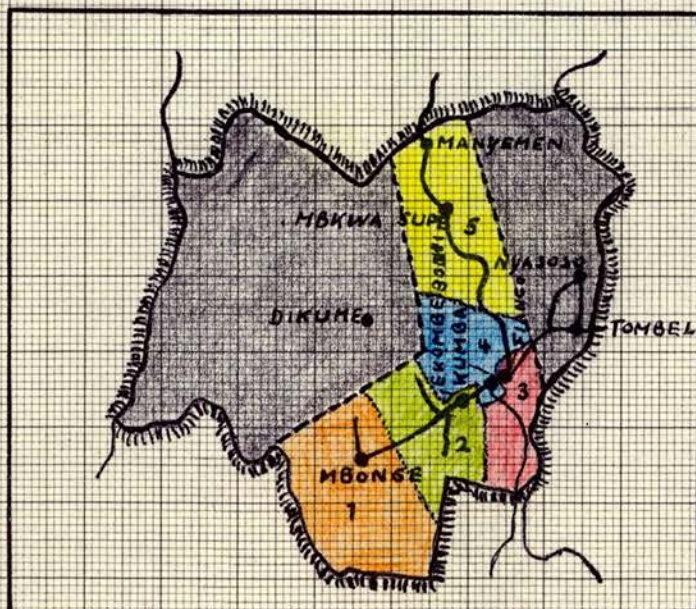
Presbyterian Church
in the Cameroons
Forest District



Presbyteries:

- I. Mamfe
- II. Dikume
- III. Nyasoso
- IV. Kumba
- V. Buea
- VI. Victoria

untouched area



Kumba Presbytery

Pastoral Areas:

- 1. Mbonge
- 2. Ekombe Bonji
- 3. Fiango
- 4. Kumba
- 5. Mbakwa Supe

0 10 20 30 40 Miles

congregational work in the area. It meets as often as is necessary, but must meet at least six times a year. It is presided over by an elder or the catechist or evangelist. The session is entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the Congregation, the maintenance of Christian order and discipline, the administration of temporal affairs and the care of the poor. It is responsible for the carrying out of decisions and orders of the controlling bodies in their Congregation. In co-operation with the pastor it examines and admits members to the Congregation. It further deals with minor cases of discipline concerning catechists and teachers and has the final control over financial matters of the Congregation.

From all this we see that the freedom the local Congregations enjoy is considerable and, as we think, necessary. Because it is in these local Congregations that the Christians live their everyday-life and it is therefore here, above all, that the presentation of the Congregation as the Body of Christ in this world becomes real. The most beautifully built up system of Church Structure and Order cannot bring life into the Church. The Church as a whole becomes a living Church in the measure the local Congregations are alive! The guiding principle for the order and structure of the Church must therefore, as E. Kellerhals¹ rightly says, be that the local congregation is the constitutive element of the Christian Church and not either the Office bearers or the Church as a whole.

1) Gemeindebildung und Kirchenordnung in Kamerun, p. 76.

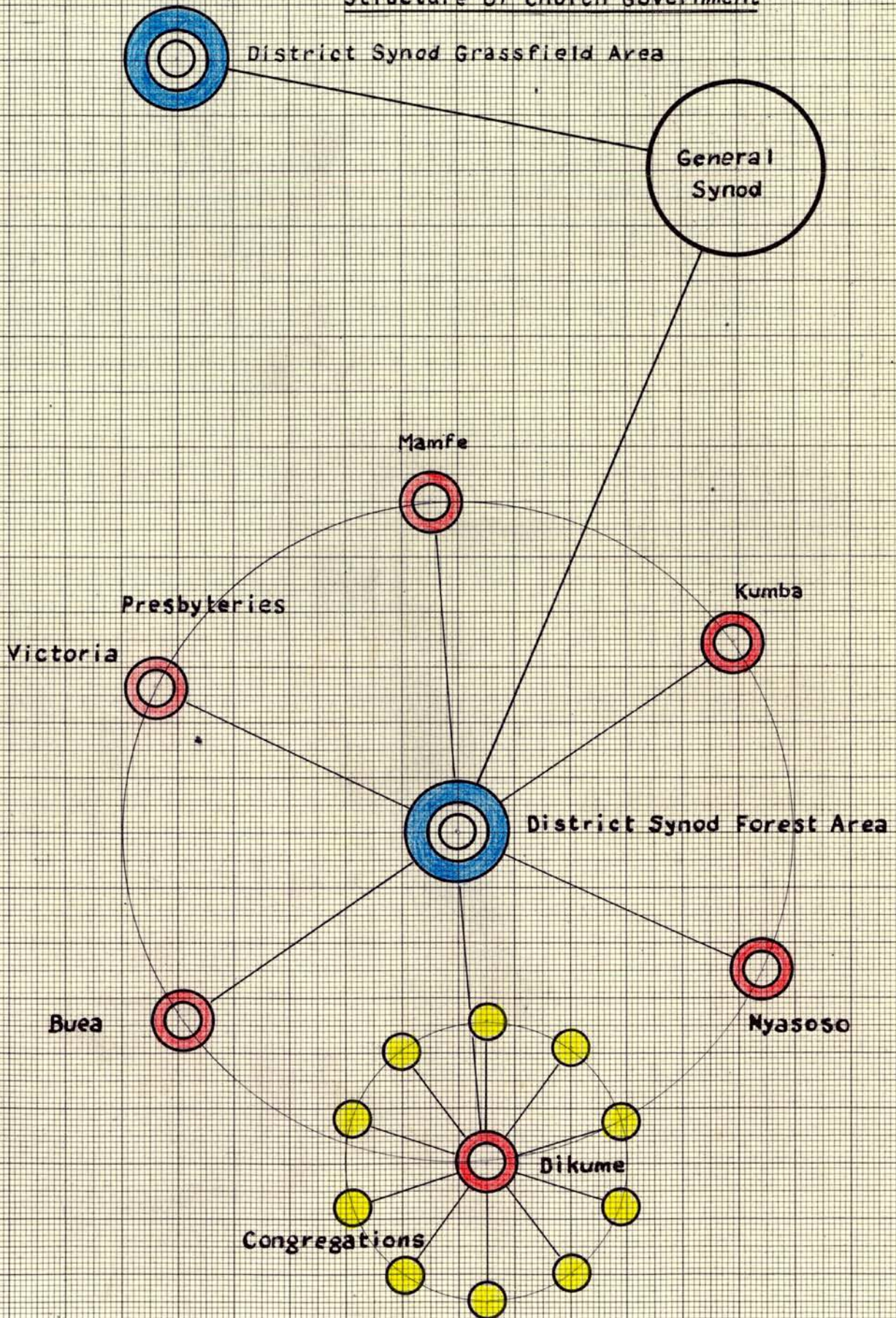
The Congregations of a certain area form a Presbytery¹ and every Presbytery has its Presbyterial Synod² whose membership consists of all ordained persons, all evangelists and catechists on active service in the Presbytery, two elders from each Congregation, one teacher from each school and any other person entrusted with a full-time ministry in the area as appointed by the Church or by the Mission. This last clause makes it possible for non-ordained European Mission staff to attend the Presbyterial Synod. The Synod meets twice a year. It fosters the building up and extension of Church work within its boundaries and it has the right to confirm or repeal decisions and suggestions submitted by the Presbyterial Synod Committee in all matters which lie within its powers, such as stationing of catechists, evangelists and pastors within the area, erection and maintenance of the houses for pastors and evangelists, recommendation of efficient catechists for the work of an evangelist to the District Synod. It chooses its representatives for the District Synod and constitutes its own executive, the Presbyterial Synod Committee. The executive acts between the sessions on behalf of the Presbyterial Synod. Its membership is: The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and the Treasurer as Officers of the Presbyterial Synod. Further two pastors or one pastor and one evangelist, one catechist and two elders one of whom may be a woman. The Synod Committee is, though its decisions have to be approved by the Synod, the driving power of the Presbytery. It has even the right to interfere when the Session of a Congregation in the Presbytery fails to carry out its duties. It is entrusted with the spiritual care and

1) See Table 15.

2) Constitution: par. 32 - 43.

TABLE 15.

Structure of Church Government



oversight of the Congregations within its bounds and forwards suggestions and petitions of the Presbyterian Synod to the next higher controlling body. It deals with questions of stationing and transfers within its area, discusses appeals from decisions of local Congregations; all this subject to approval by the Presbyterian Synod. It further recruits candidates for ministerial training and proposes their names through the District Synod to the General Synod Committee. It recommends efficient catechists for the work of an evangelist and forwards the names of Church workers concerning their retiring on pension. The man in whose office all the business is done, is the Secretary of the Presbyterian Synod who must be a pastor, whereas all the other Officers may be either ordained or unordained members of the Synod.

The six Presbyteries of the Forest District¹ are united in the District Synod². Its membership consists of all ordained persons, three unordained ministers (from evangelists, catechists or any other full-time ministry), four elders and one teacher from each Presbytery. Further all heads of Institutions and the Supervisor of Schools. The District Synod meets once a year. It has the oversight of all matters affecting the Church within its area, promoting the spiritual life of the Congregations therein. The Synod has the duty to hear and discuss reports by the Secretary of each Presbytery. Its Secretary, who does all the business of the Synod and its executive, prepares a written summary of these reports and presents it to the Secretary and Chairman of the General Synod. Furthermore, it hears and discusses reports of

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- 1) The Grasfield District consists of seven Presbyteries: Bali, Bafut, Mbengwi, Ngie-Ngwaw, Kishong, We, Bamenda.
 - 2) Ibid: par. 44 - 54.

its various standing committees. Matters arising from these reports or any other suggestions are forwarded to the General Synod Committee. The District Synod also elects its Officers, constitutes its own Executive, the District Synod Committee, and chooses its representatives to the General Synod.

The Congregations of the two Districts form the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons. It has the General Synod¹ as its highest controlling body, whose membership consists of the Secretaries of the District Synods, the Secretary of the Basel Mission, the Supervisor of Schools who are ex-officio members and the elected members from each District according to the following numbers: seven elders, twelve ordained parsons, three evangelists, two catechists and one teacher. Further one representative for the theological training centres. The General Synod's main concern is the spiritual upbuilding of the whole Church and the spreading of the Gospel within and beyond its area. It seeks through its meetings to discover the will of God for the Church to fulfil its task "in this Country" (the Cameroons), and in accordance to that will lead the Church into fuller obedience and service. The Synod has the oversight of the whole Church. It deliberates in all matters which concern the Church in doctrine, worship, discipline and organisation and it is the legislative body of the Church. It elects its own Executive, the General Synod Committee, and appoints standing committees to deal with matters affecting the whole Church. It hears and discusses the reports of its various committees, exercises discipline of pastors or their retiring on pension. It confirms

1) Ibid: par. 56 - 69.

nominations for ministerial training and ordination. The Chairman and the Secretary of the General Synod are the registered Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons.

We think that the Structure of the Church, as it is laid down in the Constitution, is a good and suitable one. On the one hand it leaves ample freedom to the local Congregation for its development and on the other hand the synodal system binds the Congregations together and gives the Church strength against outside, helping to overcome the tribal limitations which are a constant danger to the life of Congregations with members of different tribal origin. We must remember that the population of the Cameroons is an agglomerate of a great number of different tribes none of which predominates. As there is a strong natural tendency to distrust members of other tribes the danger that these tribal limitations be brought into the Church is a constant one. The following example may give us some idea of how strong such feelings are: In 1958, during a Presbyterial Synod of the Kumba Presbytery, we had to elect two auditors to audit the annual accounts of the Presbytery. Local people able to undertake such an audit are still rather rare. The Synod Committee proposed two men, who had the necessary qualifications. One was the visiting teacher of the Area and the other an accountant on pension. The Secretary of the Presbytery brought the two nominations before the Synod, explaining that only qualified men could do the job properly. Now the majority of the Synod members belonged to the Bakundu tribe, but the two proposed auditors did not belong to it. The visiting teacher, being from the Bakosi tribe which lives on friendly terms with the Bakundu, was unanimously elected.

But the accountant, being a Mfo, was not acceptable to a good number of the Bakundu. They proposed another candidate, a Mukundu of course, a farmer who had no idea about accounting. The Secretary warned them not to indulge in tribalism and explained that there was no use to appoint somebody as an auditor who had no idea about accounts. After a long discussion the accountant was finally elected by a very small majority, almost all the Bakundu voting against him. In general it may be said that the Church has done a great deal to overcome these tribal divisions and there is a growing understanding for each others peculiarities and problems.

When you build a house you should start by laying the foundation and you finish it by putting the roof on top. The modern Cameroonian seems to disregard this old method and to start his house by the roof. By this we mean that political development is going ahead at such a speed that the organic development of administration and procedure at the level of a division, not to speak about the local community, is impossible. The same applies to the Government staff. The country has its House of Assembly and its ministerial Government with Cameroonian Ministers and a Premier, but up to the present no Cameroonian District Officer that we know of; they are all expatriates. It was the Missionaries' aim to create an independent Church before the Country became politically independent. We think that it was wise to push the Church to stand on her own feet, but by this a similar situation to the one described above also arose in the Church. There is a fine form of Church Government built on the Synodal System, but

at its foundation the local Congregations fail, for reasons we shall discuss later, to follow the development. If we think back to what we said before, namely that the Church as a whole becomes a living Church in the measure the local Congregations are alive, then we must realise the great danger that this formally admirable Church Structure and Order may never function as intended.

3. Church Workers

Right from the beginning the Basel Missionary Society knew that if work was to go on in the Cameroons there would have to be teachers and preachers to share in the building up of the Church. Already in the Mission's petition to the German Government of 1886, point 3 reads: "Through higher Schools the Society seeks to educate Teachers and Preachers, and to provide such higher education in a Christian Spirit as may be necessary." The Mission started opening schools from the beginning and already in 1893 there was a Teacher Training Centre at Bonaku near Duala with 48 candidates.¹ The curriculum of the Teacher Training Centre shows that the future teachers were definitely trained to be also the preachers in the places they were sent to.² The 1914 war destroyed the whole educational system the Mission had then built up. Though the Mission after the war opened a great number of "Village Schools" (read Vernacular Schools) whose teachers were catechists³ it was only from 1940 onwards that the present school system was started. The village Schools have by now died out in our area. If it is true

1) F. Raaflaub; Gebt uns Lehrer, p. 62.

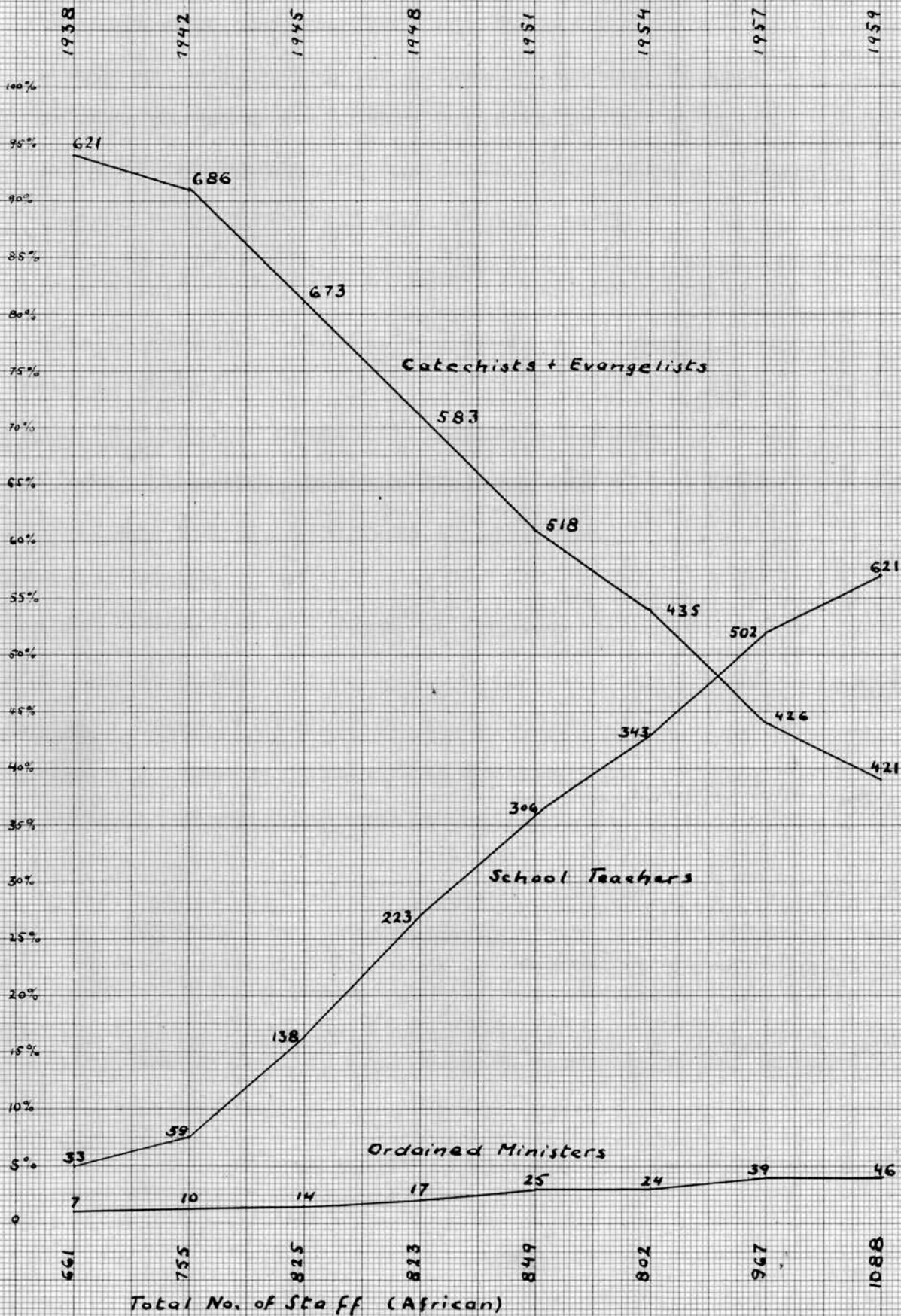
2) Ibid: p. 91.

3) The Census of 1943 mentions 388 schools with 7766 pupils. Of these only 37 were "English Schools" with 2883 pupils. Raaflaub: ibid p. 164.

that they no longer gave satisfaction because they only provided for very elementary teaching in Bible Story, vernacular reading, writing, and arithmetic, then it must also be appreciated that there was a long time when through these schools the doors were opened for the Gospel to be brought into the villages. Schools and Church were one and the teacher was also the preacher. After world war II. the situation greatly changed. The number of "English Schools" increased rapidly and the number of Vernacular Schools in our area dwindled away completely. At the same time the number of catechists decreased whereas the number of teachers increased.¹ The main reason for the number of catechists declining was obviously their financial position. Before the war the number of wage earners was still very low so that to be a catechist was quite a desirable position. But after the war this situation greatly changed and led many catechists to seek employment elsewhere and, what was worse, the number of candidates to the Catechist Training Centre at Nyasoso went down and with this also their quality. The Church tried to raise the standard of the centre and no student below Std. VI.² is now admitted. But in practice the majority of the candidates are people who have failed their final school leaving certificate Examination and the observer cannot help thinking that at least some of them go to the centre because it is the only way for a boy who has failed his examination to continue studying.

1) Table 16.

2) A complete school covers 8 school years: Infants 1 - 11 and standard 1 - VI. At the end of the 8th year the pupil sits the Final School Leaving Certificate Examination (F.S.L.C.) and receives a certificate with either "passed" or "failed" on it.

TABLE 16Comparative Table of Staff

As mentioned before there is in most places a great lack of co-operation between the catechist and the teachers in a village. As we have seen the catechist was formerly also the school teacher and many of them resent the present situation because they feel that they were pushed out of their position by the teachers. But the great conflict remains of course the difference in salary¹. The following comparison will show what we mean:

Salary of a: ²	per annum: minimum - maximum	
<u>Grade 111 Teacher:</u> Std VI. + 3 years of Teacher		
Training Centre	£120	228
<u>Grade 11 Teacher:</u> Grade 111 Teacher + 2 years		
of Higher Elementary Teacher Training Centre	£156	384
<u>Catechist:</u> Std VI. + 3 years at Catechist		
Training Centre	£ 36	48
<u>Pastor:</u> Catechist + 3 years at Nyasoso		
Theological School	£ 90	120
<u>Pastor:</u> Grade 11 Teacher or ex Secondary		
School + 3 years of theological training		
at Umuahia (Nigeria) or Trinity College,		
Kumasi (Ghana)	£180	300

-
- 1) Teachers Salaries are paid by Government through the Mission according to a scale fixed by the Education Department.
 - 2) An unskilled labourer working at a rate of 3 shillings per day and 26 working days a month earns up to £46 a year!

Dealing with some of the main difficulties of modern education in the Cameroons we stated that one of the greatest obstacles was the differences of background provided by the traditional home life on the one side and of the education provided in the schools on the other. And how difficult it must therefore be for an African child to develop an organic understanding of its every-day life and of the community it lives in. It should therefore be the task of the Church authorities to help in deepening the understanding of the school's function among the Christian congregations. But at this point we come against another great difficulty. There is very little understanding and sympathy for each others work between the catechist, evangelist and pastor on the one side and the school teachers on the other. This state of affairs exists in spite of the Church Constitution's declaration¹ that "the Church regards such institutions", as schools, "as essential for her witness and life, and takes a keen interest in their work and development", or the letter of appointment² for teachers saying that "it is also the teacher's task to see to it that the school is a healthy member of the local community". Where does this ill-feeling, so detrimental to a healthy development of school and community, stem from? We may distinguish three main sources:

1) Paragraph 73.

2) Letter of Appointment for Basel Mission Teachers; p. 2.

1. Teachers' salaries are much higher than the salaries of¹ pastors, not to speak about the catechists.
2. The teachers' superior educational background is resented, mainly by the older generation of pastors and catechists.
3. The lack of understanding on the pastors' and catechists' side regarding their office to minister to the laity.

From what we have seen it has become abundantly clear that everything possible must be done to overcome these difficulties among the Church workers of the different branches.

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- 1) Here again we are up against a difficulty which seems to be almost universal in Africa. Stephen Neill, in his "Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Africa", writes: "When the trained teacher emerges from his training school, he is eligible for a salary fixed by the government, on a generous, not to say extravagant, scale. When the Catechist has finished his training, he earns what the church can pay him, and this is sometimes infinitesimal, in comparison with the salary of a teacher. Undoubtedly there is tension between these two classes. The teacher tends to feel that his responsibility is to government which has paid for him and is now paying him, and to feel little sense of obligation to share in the work of the Church. The catechist, unless he is a man of outstanding spiritual quality, tends to be jealous of the teacher who is paid so much more, and who, in countries where status is so closely associated with pay, enjoys higher regard in the community than the spiritual guide. Sometimes the catechist tries to compensate for his sense of inferiority by standing rather rigidly on a spiritual authority, which he may have neither the character nor the knowledge adequately to sustain." p. 17.
See also the Report of the All-Africa Church Conference on "The African Ministry; p. 90 - 91.

One way we tried, and which proved to be quite successful, was to bring all the pastors and headmasters together quarterly and to discuss the problems arising in each school together. This has helped in an interest in each others' work and in fostering a sense of common responsibility.

1. The Ministry of the Catechist.¹

The educational background of a Catechist to-day is 8 years of elementary school and 3 years at the Catechist Training Centre at Nyasoso. After this he is entrusted with work in one or more Congregations. There he preaches the Word but does not administer the Sacraments, he instructs candidates for baptism and confirmation, encourages and leads Bible Classes. He fosters Sunday School work and youth fellowships. He is required to visit regularly members of the Congregation, especially the sick, the lonely and the backsliders and to try to win new converts. As a rule he conducts the burial of members of the congregation. He further keeps the congregational files and sees that the minutes of the various controlling bodies and other records are properly filed. He also holds the congregational register and other books of the congregation. Due to the lack of Catechists many of them minister to more than one congregation. A good Catechist may be made an Evangelist if need arises, or if he is young and possesses the required educational background he may be going to the Theological Training Centre at Nyasoso

1) Details about the ministry of the catechist, evangelist and pastor are laid down in special guiding principles called: "Directions for Pastors, Evangelists and Catechists."
Ibid: 1.

for a three years course after which he may be ordained as a minister.

ii. The Ministry of the Evangelist¹

The Evangelist is entrusted with work in a pastoral area² or part of it. He preaches the Word but does not administer the Sacraments unless he is commissioned to do so. He may assist the pastor of the area to conduct preparatory talks before the Lord's Supper. He takes a lead in the team work of evangelistic activities among pagans and backsliders in the pastoral area, examines candidates for baptism and confirmation, supervises the work being done in Sunday Schools and youth fellowships and visits the sick. He prepares his own itinerary which may coincide with the itinerary of the pastor in the area. He may solemnise marriages contracted according to Native Law and Custom. He shows the members of his congregations their responsibility for the upbuilding of the Church and towards the non-Christians and backsliders, leading them in their Christian witness according to their several gifts they may have received as members of the body of Christ.

We think that these directions for the work of an Evangelist are well drawn up. But in fact there is very little understanding about the special task of an Evangelist among the Evangelists themselves and among the other Church workers. Instead of seeing that the work of an Evangelist is a peculiar one which needs special gifts, the Catechists tend to misunderstand it as a form of promotion for older, faithful Catechists and many Pastors think of them as being their underlings

1) Directions for Evangelists; *ibid*: 11.

2) See Map No. 3.

("small boys") who are to prepare their way. A Pastor who has no Evangelist in his pastoral area may resent this and feel himself degraded.

iii. The Ministry of the Pastor¹

The Pastor is entrusted with work in a pastoral area which may be limited to one congregation, unless he is appointed for special work in the Church. The example of the Kumba Presbytery² shows how the presbytery is divided up into five pastoral areas each of them with one Pastor. But the presbytery has six Pastors one of them being the secretary of the Presbytery and at the same time the Manager of the Schools. This means that the sixth is appointed for special work in the Church. Others may be appointed for youth work or as teachers in the Catechist Training Centre or the Theological School.

The Pastor preaches the Word and administers the Sacraments, supervises and takes his share in the instruction for baptism and confirmation, awakens, fosters and co-ordinates other ministries in his sphere of work for the upbuilding of the body. He shows the Christians their responsibility for the well-being and growth of the Church and towards the non-Christians and backsliders. He helps to train and prepare laymen - and women for special services in the Church according to the several gifts they may have received as members of the body of Christ. He himself takes a lead in the team work of evangelistic activities among pagans and backsliders and is specially

1) Directions for Pastors; *ibid*: 111.

2) See Map 3.

concerned with the proclamation of the gospel to the non-Christian world. It should be his desire that true fellowship among fellow-workers and members in the area be fostered and deepened. Furthermore, he is urged to maintain the true doctrine and discipline of the Church in his sphere of work. He solemnises marriages and may be delegated by the Chairman of the Presbyterial Synod to dedicate other ministers of the Church to their work.

Each Presbytery is divided up into a number of pastoral areas comprising a varying number of congregations. Such an area is headed by one pastor who visits the congregations in turn and dispenses the Sacraments 5 times a year. The total number of pastors, Africans and non-Africans, doing pastoral work in a presbytery amounts to 57 in 1959 of which a number of secretaries do not head a pastoral area. If we take 50 pastors as heading such an area we have, with 60'000 Church members at the end of 1958, about 1'200 Church members per pastor and all this spread over such a vast area of 16'581 square miles with about 610 congregations.

4. The Elders and the Local Congregation

We stated before that the Church as a whole becomes a living Church in the measure the local congregations are alive. The Church has its ordained ministry, the pastors, and its unordained ministry, the catechists and evangelists. It is true that the liveliness of a congregation depends very much upon the quality of the work done by these Church workers in their respective congregations. But against these paid officers of the Church there are the freely elected Church elders in each congregation, and life and discipline of the local

congregation very much depends upon their liveliness and activeness. Such elders¹ must therefore be experienced communicant members of the congregation whose life and character is exemplary². Preferably they should be married men of reasonable age and not new converts. Also women of good reputation, married and un-married, can be chosen as elders. But as a rule their number should not exceed that of the men. They may be appointed for special service of the women, the care of the poor and the sick. The elders' meeting, the session, is the controlling body of the local congregation.

It is the special task of the elders to be in their whole behaviour, a good example to both Christians and Pagans. It is their duty to visit the members of the congregation often, especially the sick and the lonely, helping them by their advice, admonition and comfort through the Word of God. For this purpose bigger congregations may be divided into several parts, each elder looking after a certain area.

The elders are to give special attention to members who have gone astray, or have been excluded, and try to lead them back into the fellowship of the Church. They are to care for Christian children whose parents fail to fulfil their vow of baptism and to stand as witnesses of baptism on behalf of the congregation and take special care in the guidance of the children and youth. They are further to try to settle misunderstandings and quarrels between Christians and to restore peace in matrimonial disputes. But in all this they should

1) Constitution; par. 6 - 15.

2) 1. Tim. 3,1 f; and Tit. 1, 5 - 9 are quoted in this connection.

beware of lording it over the members of the congregation or engaging in dishonest dealings.

We remember the position the elder (mutudu) holds in traditional society. We should therefore not be astonished to find a certain similarity between him and the elder of the Christian congregation, also called mutudu. Both of them take a central position in the life of their respective community. But if the authority of the traditional elder is based on the fact that he as the head of the family makes the sacrifices to the ancestors, or that as the old man he embodies in a particular way the continuity of his lineage, the authority of the Church elder is primarily a spiritual authority and he should, as the constitution rightly says¹, be set apart and dedicated in accordance with the model of the Apostolic Church. And his duty is to see that the body of Christ is built up and that the members follow God's law in reverence and holiness.

Now to understand some of the difficulties of to-day we have to look back into the past. In those days a man, when he became a Christian, was excluded from taking part in any major political activity because being a Christian he could not be a member of the secret society at the same time. By this he was in traditional society automatically excluded from political leadership. This is certainly one of the main reasons why so many Christian men fell back from the Church, apart from polygamy. Even to-day the number of

1) Par. 6.

chiefs, who are Christians, is comparatively small. And those chiefs who are Christians were usually baptised before their becoming a chief and have often no authority in their community. Here also there are a few exceptions as for example the Bafo chief Abel Mukete of Kumba who has been a Church elder in our Kumba congregation for many years. In general it may be said that these old men who became Christians in their youth had to stand much firmer than the present day youth. To be baptised meant to renounce many things in those days. The greater number of the Church elders to-day is made up by these men, and this is one of the greatest difficulties our congregations encounter. The situation has greatly changed since those early days. For the common man, Christian or non-Christian, Christianity has proved itself as being one of the agents which help in opening up the country. It is therefore now no handicap to be a Christian, in the contrary in the coastal area "Christian" has almost become synonymous with "progressive" whereas "Pagan" has become synonymous with "conservative". The present situation is such that in most of our congregations we have these old men as elders who are no more able to follow the rapid development that is taking place around them, and to bear the increasingly heavy burden and responsibility that has been placed upon them during the last few years. Unfortunately it may also be said that many of these old elders try to keep their position as elders because there is no room for them on the political platform of their district so that quite often they belong to the politically weaker elements of the community. That this situation often leads to friction between the elders and the younger

catechist is now understandable. In many cases, when we tried to work out new methods of work with the catechists, even on purely administrative grounds, the effort failed because of the resistance of the elders who think themselves to be the "rulers" of their congregation. We heard many complaints even from pastors that they were refused permission to look into the books, mainly the cash books, of congregations and in many cases the catechist has no idea of what funds are in the local treasury. What the relationship between these elders and the younger generation of Christians is may well be imagined. All this leads to the rather peculiar situation in which those who should be the leading members of the congregation and the pillars of the Church are those who need help most.

How can this situation be ameliorated? It has proved very difficult to remove such elders and to replace them by better qualified members of the congregation as they must be elected by the congregational meeting. Many of the younger people do not stay long enough in a village to gain the confidence of the members of the local congregation or they belong to the migratory labour force which is constantly on the move. The result is that these old elders are again and again re-elected. There are, we think, two ways to improve the situation. One which is already used is for "elders courses" to help them to grow into a better understanding of the present day problems; and the other is to limit the possibility of the elders being re-elected for

more than eight years.¹

After all we have said about the elders it is clear that their authority among the local Christians more resembles the authority of the elder in traditional society, than the spiritual authority described before. And the caution with which they should beware of lording it over the members of the congregation is not understood or disregarded. Instead of being the spiritual advisers of their fellow-Christians, an elders' meeting with a member of the Church who has fallen short of the Christian standards in one way or another, looks more like a court of law, a fact that shall preoccupy us again in the next paragraph.

Church worship² is held in a simple way. The congregation gathers regularly on the Lord's Day for Divine Service. It comes together in other meetings during the week for the same purpose of worship (prayer meetings, bible classes, etc.). As many catechists cater for more than one congregation the Church elders or school teachers step in and preach when they are absent. The hymns sung in Church are the conventional ones imported from Europe and translated into vernacular. Though songs which are truly African are

1) At present par. 9. of the Constitution dealing with the election of elders reads as follows: "The Session shall consider names of suitable candidates and present them to the congregational meeting. The congregational meeting may make other nominations, if they so desire. From those so named the number of elders required shall be elected. Their term of office is four years and they are eligible for re-election."

2) Constitution: par. 74 - 80.

also coming into use in our Church as in other parts of Africa.¹ These songs are usually sung by singing bards and are often accompanied by hand clapping and sometimes also by drumming. This brings up the question of the place of African Culture, mainly African Art, in Worship and Church Buildings. The question about the buildings may be answered in this way, that the small Village-Churches, built with local materials, are usually hard to distinguish from an ordinary village-house, but for their size. But modern, permanent, Church buildings are usually built in a style which has nothing in common with the shape of traditional buildings. We even think that the putting up of such buildings in a style resembling the traditional buildings might be resented by nationalists. Because, for the Cameroonian Nationalist, to become a free African usually means to become as similar as possible to the Europeans. These people have not yet become aware of the fact that they may have something to contribute out of their own cultural heritage to the creation of forms of Christian worship.

We do certainly agree with J.H. Nketia², when he says that "the creation of forms of Christian worship is not a prerogative of the West...." And he is surely also right in saying that "it was inevitable, of course, that African Churches should at first be extensions of "home churches" abroad, and that we should find here a reflection of the criss-cross organisation that characterises the church

1) All-Africa Church Conference, Report p. 70.

2) The Contribution of African Culture to Christian Worship. p. 267



12.

Church at Manyemen Leprosy Settlement, Kumba



13.

in the west. It was inevitable that Christian worship should be transplanted in its western setting ... But it seems hardly necessary that it should be perpetuated in every detail in African worship."

We must be quite clear on this point, that the introduction of elements out of the African cultural heritage into worship is no business of Western missionaries. "Ultimately the problem of indigenising Christian worship rests with African Christians who have an insight into the Christian Faith and a sympathetic understanding of the problems of worship in their own changing society".¹

It is interesting to read Philip Potter², commenting on the discussion following Nketia's paper on the indigenisation of worship saying: "Unfortunately this discussion was not pursued very far because few Africans were seriously involved in it". But Philip Potter, in our opinion, only sees part of the truth when he says: "Perhaps the Africans, with some justice, feel that whatever they might think on these questions, power lies in other hands"³.

We agree with Nketia's point of view, but the fact that so few Africans were really interested in this subject shows to us again that, apart from a few, they have not yet felt the urgency of this particular problem. The burning problems for African Christians, as the conference clearly showed, are the Church's attitude to family life and youth, to economic life and to political life.⁴

1) Ibid; p. 278

2) Report on the All-Africa Church Conference; in Background Information for Church and Society: March 1958, No. 19; p. 19.

3) Ibid; p. 19

4) Ibid; p. 17

The Church recognises Baptism and the Lord's Supper as essential acts of worship. Both sacraments are administered in the presence of the congregation with the preaching of the word at a public service. Each Pastor should tour his area every two months for the dispensation of the sacraments. Personal preparation for the Lord's Supper in self-examination is enjoined on all members, and each Church-member is expected to see the pastor before the communion service for a preparatory talk. This talk, called bekwali¹, is translated into pidgin English by "I de go for confess", which wrongly brings it together with the Roman Catholic "confession". Usually one or two elders are present during these preparatory talks.

Anybody before being admitted to the Lord's Supper should have undergone catechumen instruction for at least one year. A real understanding of the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith is essential and "not merely the repetition of actual words of the catechism." This last warning from the Constitution points towards a very sore point. The language situation presents an almost insuperable problem for the instruction of adults in backward areas, where they understand neither Duala nor English, with the result that they can recite the Lord's prayer and the ten commandments by heart in Duala, but do not understand what they say. They cannot read their own Bible and are therefore entirely dependent on the translation of their catechist.

1) Bekwali, from kwala = to talk.

In general it may be said that the Christian community in a village, which still has a more or less homogeneous population, fitted^s fairly well into the local community. It has even fitted in so well that in some cases there may be a danger that the congregation will lose its identity. In a way this tendency must have been present right from the beginning of missionary work, which was done mainly through schools. The erection of school buildings and teachers' quarters was, with a few exceptions in mission centres, the task of the local community. And it was usually the chief who allocated to each quarter of the village its share of work. The same happened later with Church buildings built in "bush-style". It has happened during the last few years that, when such a congregation wanted to build a Church in "permanent style", that the members of the whole community, both Christians and Pagans, collected hundreds of pounds for the building fund. It has become a matter of pride to have a fine Church in the village. But the real feelings of the villagers came up only when the Church had to have the land leased upon which the Church building stands. As the secretary of the Kumba Presbytery the author fought for three years with the Village and the Church authorities of Mbakwa Supe to have their Church land leased. This was without result because the people felt that the Church belonged to the village and not to the Christian Congregation.¹

1) The people of Mbakwa Supe, including Christians and Pagans, paid about £800 and the District Church Treasury about £400 towards the building.

All this shows, that the Christian Congregation is not isolated from the local community. And it will depend on the attitude, sympathy and understanding of the local Christians if they are to know where they can identify themselves with the aims and practices of the local community and where they will have to stand aside as witnesses of a kingdom that is not of this world.

The situation in towns as Victoria, Tiko, Kumba and Mamfe differs very much from the situation described above. And we have further to differentiate between these towns and the large plantation camps. In the plantation camps are assembled, by the hundreds, young men coming from all tribes in the country, most of them single¹, and they live in houses provided by the plantation. They have their own hospitals, their own cinemas, their own shops and their own community halls. The great number of them belong to the migratory labour force which is moving about between the plantations and their home-village. Except from that they are organised in trade unions and tribal unions, they take no political interest in the area they live in. A great number of these young men are Christians who attended services and paid their Church contribution so long as they were at home. But as soon as they arrive in the plantations most of them disappear and do not take part in the life of the plantation congregation.

In the towns the original population is usually a small minority and the great majority are "strangers", as they are called. The difference between these strangers and the plantation labourers is

1) We mentioned before that in Victoria Division, where most of the plantations are, we had in 1953 1'859 Males per 1'000 Females.

that they may be more or less permanently domiciled here, whereas the others are migratory. But the attachments to their own tribal homes are stronger than those to the town they live in. What K.A. Busia¹ says about urbanisation in Ghana is certainly also true for urban areas in the Cameroons. He writes about these attachments to the tribal homes: "This is a specially marked effect of the kinship ties which are the basis of African social organisation. A person's membership of his lineage binds him for ever to the village where his lineage is localised. Wherever he may go, however long he may be away, he belongs to his lineage town or village. The economic and social obligations of kinship such as those connected with funerals, marriages, and divorce, as well as political allegiance and jural rights and status which are also tied up with kinship, keep alive his attachment to his native town or village. The town dweller does not neglect his kinship obligations".

As in the plantations so also in towns the tribal unions are very strong. They keep alive the sentiments of loyalty to the lineage town or village. Further, the members of the tribal unions assist one another in many ways; over litigation, during illness or bereavement, or to find employment. These tribal associations may be a hindrance to the development of a sense of civic responsibility by the "strangers" resident in the town, but they provide, as Busia further says², "a means

1) Report on a Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi. p. 14.

2) Ibid: p. 15

whereby people of similar interests are brought into social relationships; and more important still, through arbitration, and the control they exercise over their members, they are potent factors for the maintenance of law and order within the town. In this sense they form part of the governmental institutions of the Municipality".

If on the one hand tribal unions keep the members of the same tribe together, they tend on the other hand, to deepen or at least to perpetuate the divisions between the different tribes living in one and the same place. If a member of the same tribe gets into trouble he is helped by the other members of his union. But help for a man from another tribe is usually refused, or only provided against payment, quite often of an exorbitant character. The foreman provides employment for his tribesmen freely but demands bribes from men outside his tribe.¹ The much praised loyalty and obligation to help one's fellow ends for the average African when the man in question is neither a kinsman or fellow tribesman. Here the Church provides a bridge covering the wide gap between the members of different tribal origin. The Ibos are the most hated people in the Cameroons but the author was always amazed to see the ways and spirit in which the Bafo of Kumba Town Congregation co-operated with the Ibo section of the Kumba Church. It is true that tribalism is also felt inside the Church but it is equally true that the Church is increasingly helping towards an understanding of community extending beyond the tribal boundaries.

1) Cases are known to us where foremen took up to six pounds in bribes from ordinary labourers seeking employment with wages between four and five pounds a month.

We said before that a person's membership of his own lineage binds him for ever to the village where his lineage is localised. This fact has also a very strong influence on the congregations in urban areas. Even if Church members have been staying in such a town for a few years they will still consider themselves as "strangers" not only in town but also in the local congregation. The example of Mbakwa Supe, where this whole Bakundu town collected the money for a new Church building, is almost impossible in an urban area with people of mixed tribal origin. But an Evangelist or a Church - elder may be sent by his congregation in a backward area to go and visit his tribesmen in the plantations or in the towns and to collect money from them for the Church or School building at home, and he will get it. Whereas in all these urban areas it is extremely difficult to collect the necessary funds for Church and Schoolbuildings to be built in such centres. As "strangers" the Church-members understand themselves to belong to the congregation in their home-village.

In the urban areas language also is a great problem. As long as the congregation consists of people with some educational background a solution is always possible. For example in Kumba town Church three Sunday services are held; at 7 a.m. in Ibo, at 9 a.m. in Duala with a translation into English and at 5 p.m. in English. But in the Fiango congregation of Kumba where we usually have people of a lower standard of education and where a great number of refugees from the French Cameroons live, the problem is more complex. If anywhere then it is here where you can get an experience of what the building of the tower

of Babel must have meant. Duala, Basa, Bali, Bamileke, French and English are the main languages understood. But it is impossible to find a language understood by the majority of the members of this congregation. Not even "pidgin English" is understood by all of them. During Services it proved to be impossible to sing hymns together. We had to order the Church members to sit together in the Church according to the language they understood and they then started singing in their own language in turn. So that during one service five hymns were sung in five different languages.

This shows some of the peculiar difficulties of congregations in urban areas. But in spite of these difficulties we think that a Church does well to concentrate as much as possible upon these urban centres. It is from here that changes, political, economic and social come. And it is here that the Church has to proclaim the one great and all-important change which came in this world in Jesus Christ.

Par. 28. The Problem of Church Discipline

The question of how Church Discipline should be carried out in the Cameroonian Church was raised with the taking over of the work from the English Baptist Mission in 1886; and since that time has been the unceasing concern of the missionaries.

W. Hofer in his enquiry on the Problem of Church Discipline of the Basel Mission in the Cameroons¹ traced this problem right to the very beginnings of mission work in the country. He shows us how much

1) Das Problem der Kirchengzucht der Basler Mission in Kamerun; 1955. (Manuscript, E.95, Archiv-Bücherei Basler Missionshaus)

the Home Board of the Mission in Basel and the missionaries on the field were constantly preoccupied by this question of the right Church Discipline, so difficult to be solved in the right spirit. The same problems were also treated at great length by H. Steinborn in his book on Church Discipline in the History of the German Evangelical Missions.¹

1. The Character of the Church

The Church is founded by Christ and is maintained and constantly renewed through the fact that Christ allows His Word to be preached, and His Sacraments to be administered, and, through the Holy Ghost, makes Word and Sacrament so alive that faith is aroused and maintained in men, who since this happens, are themselves called to be witnesses of Christ. When one is united in faith with Christ, one belongs to His church as a member of His body². If one does not believe, one does not really belong to the church.

We cannot in this connection go into the controversy over the "ecclesia visibilis" and "invisibilis", one of which would be worldly and the other holy. In any case there exists an extraordinary tension between the noble designation used in the New Testament to denote the church, and the very murky truth reported by church history. It is no wonder that many people could have thought that the descriptions used must have been applied to a transcendental entity. Yet such a distinction is foreign to the New Testament. The apostolic community

1) Die Kirchengeschichte in der Geschichte der deutschen evangelischen Mission; Leipzig 1928. Kapitel 2.: Die Kirchengeschichte in der Basler Mission.

2) 1. Corinthians 12, 12-13.

best known to us, the one in Corinth, was indeed not particularly better than an average Cameroonian community. And yet it is referred to as "The saints in Corinth", "the body of Christ", "the Bride of Christ". We may not, then, suggest that a community should be at least to some extent, free from stain for it to be really a church of Christ. At the same time it is true that the community of Christ is in no wise identical with the conception of the "visible church" which has gradually stamped the protestant understanding of this institution. The church understands the admonition not to put itself on a par with this world. It is in its own nature an eschatological entity. It has its life in Christ, and for that reason belongs alone to the new age. It lives in separation from the world, not in the sense that it separates itself from it, as the Pharisees did, but unhesitatingly its own peculiar nature makes itself felt.

That does not mean that the church should in "sectarian" fashion, become a closed community with definite boundaries. It acts as a missionary and therefore is naturally open to entry from without. In spite of its difference from the world, in fact because of it, it influences the world. Its work is based on the certainty that the earth, and everything therein, belongs to the Lord, and it opens wide its door for all men who seek, who ask, and who have not yet seen the light. Every suggestion, to the effect that at least the communion table must be "pure", must be rejected. Rightly the New Testament emphasises that a man must prove himself before he comes to the table of the Lord;¹ but the individual should do that with a view to himself,

1) 1. Corinthians 11, 28.

not to avoid a "staining" of the communion table or a "pollution" of the congregation. It is important to appreciate that this conception of the church knows no subjective emphasising of particular experiences, gradations of piety, results of sanctification, and the like, as though these things were constituents of the church. It is a question of a new attitude of obedience to the call of the Word, and of not conforming to this world. This new attitude is still inherently sinful and therefore it lives only out of justification through God. It is new only in Christ.

2. How is Church Discipline possible?

Although the church is the permanently new work of Christ through the Word and the Holy Ghost, it is, as we have seen, a reality in this life, a visible church. For this reason it must possess some organisation and in more than one way, enter relations with other social entities, especially with people and states. As organisation it has also to make certain regulations which are binding for its members. Closely related to these regulations is the question of church discipline. Is the church to have a will and a power of this kind, in that it sets boundaries, either completely shutting out men from the church or forbidding them to take part in certain church activities?

In our opinion the New Testament¹ demands church discipline, on the one hand where there is any question of gross sins, and, on the

1) Matthew 18, 15 - 17; see also 7, 6; Romans 16, 17; 1 Corinthians 5, 2; 2 Corinthians 6, 14; 7, 1; Thessalonians 3, 6; 1 Timothy 1, 20; Titus 3, 10; 2 John 10 f.

other in face of heresies. This is all the more worth nothing in that not only Jesus,¹ but also Paul² warn us against judging. Therefore Church discipline must be practiced without censoriousness.

It is clear that the danger inherent in the practice of Church discipline are great, and that disastrous mistakes are possible. Yet we must also add even if we are unable to fulfil a certain task properly, we do not have the right to push aside the task itself.

3. Law and Church Discipline in the Cameroons.

Looking into the Church Constitution of the Basel Mission Church of 1935³ we find that the way Church discipline is conceived and understood there conforms to what we stated in principle above. The heart of it reads as follows: "When a member of the community notices that a fellow-Christian falls into sin, he should first of all try to put him right with kindly temper. If he has no success in this, he should point out the matter to the community's pastor or to one of the elders so as not, by keeping silence, to be an accessory to another's sin. If the leader of the congregation has spoken to the guilty without success, he should lay the matter before the presbytery. The goal of the deliberation is always to bring the defaulter to realisation and knowledge of his fault".

The position the Presbyterian Church takes regarding this problem only differs in a few minor points. To make the Church's position clear we find it necessary to quote the whole part on the "Discipline of the

1) Matthew 7, 1f.

2) 1. Corinthians 4, 5.

3) Betesedi ba mwemba: Paragraph 141.

Church" in the Constitution¹. "Par. 81. The aim of discipline in the Church is to help each member to grow unto "a perfect man" (Eph. 4, 13). Discipline seeks the glory of God, the purity of the Church and the spiritual growth of the members.

Par. 82. The principal means of maintaining discipline and order in the congregation are instruction and exhortation based on the Word of God. Discipline may be exercised in the form of admonition, rebuke, suspension from the Lord's Supper, loss of rights of membership, deposition from office and excommunication from the body.

Par. 83. The Session is responsible for the exercise of discipline in the local congregation. Where difficulties arise any case may be referred to the Presbyterial Synod Committee and to the District Synod Committee and General Synod Committee. No Session should exercise discipline over any but the members of its own congregation, not interfere with or review the action of another Session. In difficult cases the Session of one congregation may make suggestions towards the solution of the matter to the Session of another congregation.

Par. 84. The care of all disciplined members and of those who have fallen into polygamy should lie on the heart of the congregation. All the members of the congregation are called to share in the responsibility of seeking and trying to restore in love and humility those who have gone astray (Matthew 18, 15 - 17). Those fallen into polygamy but still adhering to the Church should be encouraged to take an active

1) Constitution: Paragraph 81 - 86.

part in Church life though they cannot enjoy the rights and privileges of membership. The names of excluded members may be read at a public service, prayer and intercession being offered for their restoration. Members who have been suspended from the Lord's Supper are still members of the Church and stand under its rules.

Par. 85. Re-admission of an excluded member shall take place at a meeting of public worship, the pastor receiving the member with prayer and the right hand of fellowship. Such a member may be required to attend catechism instruction for some time, before being received again into communion fellowship.

Par. 86. The discipline exercised by a Session upon any member of the congregation is binding upon that member in all that concerns the congregation, and if he goes to another congregation the Session of that congregation must regard him as a member under discipline."

We stated at the beginning of this paragraph that the Home Board of the Basel Mission and the missionaries on the field were constantly preoccupied by this question of the right Church Discipline. What was it that preoccupied them so much? W. Oettli¹ made this plain when he wrote: "We can see in the Cameroons how Christianity is understood by the majority as the acceptance of a new custom; Christian life is therefore surrounded with a fence of orders which are to be kept. But very

1) Werdende Volkskirche in Afrika: p. 11: "Wir beobachten es zum Beispiel in Kamerun, wie das Christentum von den meisten als eine neue Sitte verstanden wird, die man annimmt; das Christenleben wird darum mit einem Zaun von Vorschriften umgeben, die es innezuhalten gilt. Zum Kern des Evangeliums aber, zum Ergreifen der sündenvergebenden Gnade Gottes, wie sie in Christus und seinem Kreuze offenbar geworden ist dringen verhältnismässig nur wenige hindurch".

See also Wenger: Das Gesetz in der missionarischen Verkündigung: p.6.

few break through to the heart of the Gospel, to the acceptance of God's redeeming grace as it is revealed in Jesus Christ and his Cross". This is the general tenor of the great majority of the reports on this subject.

Let us remember that many Christians conceive the Church as being a social institution analogous to the tribe but endowed with greater power. Now we know that for the well-being of the individual and of the community in traditional society it was essential that the rules and taboos, which guided and protected the life of the community, be followed. As the Church is conceived as analogous to such a community, the Church members apply the same rules to her. A man is taken into the new community through baptism. After his acceptance into the Church, the Christian has to take precautions to remain in this new community. This he achieves, as mentioned before, by not coming under Church Discipline, by attending Communion as regularly as possible, and by paying his Church Dues. It is clear that this legalism which shows a total misunderstanding of God's grace and which, even worse, queries God's freedom must have been and still is a scandal to the missionaries. Indeed it is distressing to see how almost every principle or advice is turned into a law.

As the ordinances of the Church become law analogous to the rules and taboos of the traditional community, the pastor, as we have shown before tends to become the "chief" and the elder the "quarter-head" in the Church. It is clear that in this way Church Discipline has in the life of the Christian community a meaning which should never fall to

its lot. So in place of the message of love comes the law; preaching, instead of being the proclamation of God's acts of love in Jesus Christ, becomes moral exhortation and the elders' session resembles a court of law.

The practical problems of Church Discipline centre around four major points which are:

- i. Taking part in Pagan Religious Activities.
- ii. Adultery.
- iii. Polygamy.
- iv. Church Contributions.

i. Taking part in Pagan Religious Activities

When discussing the problems of Church-elders we saw that formerly the young Christians had to stand much firmer against the temptations of their pagan surroundings than is the case to-day. As the Christians were only a very small minority it was more difficult to escape the grip of the majority of the community. The pagan practices (e.g. the ceremonies of the various secret societies, the common feasting of the ancestors) were much more of a public occasion than they are now and it was therefore harder to escape them. If formerly many Christians came under discipline because of their taking part in such activities, to-day this rarely ever happens. We know that many Church-members still have their part in the feeding of ancestors and many of them go round with all sorts of "protective medicines". Some of the pastors take a rather strong stand against such practices but it rarely ever comes to the point that some one is refused the Lord's Supper for such reasons.

There has been exception to this during the last few years among the Bakweris in the costal area who knew a rather strong revival of fetishism by a fetish called Obasenjom introduced in many villages. In some places the majority of the Christians fell for this fetish and had to be put under discipline.

ii. Adultery.

From statistics¹ it has become clear that most of those who came under Discipline, besides polygamists, had to be disciplined for adultery and fornication. It sometimes looks as if there was but one sort of sin, namely the sexual ones. The following facts are taken from the reports of 1903² and show us how already in the early days the Church was suffering from the same problem. The following came under Discipline in the same year:

In Biendende the teacher because of fornication

In Bonamateke 9 members because of polygamy

In Njanga the teacher because of adultery

In Bonaku 2 elders because of polygamy

In Nkom 5 members because of fornication

In Baiseng the whole congregation of 4 members and
7 catechumen all because of adultery and
fornication

In Nyasoso 2 teachers and one school boy because of
fornication

1) Hofer: *ibid*; p. 117.

2) Akten Kamerun 1903; Annual Reports.

In Lobethal 33 members most of them because of polygamy
 In Victoria 4 because of hard drinks (schnaps), adultery
 and magical practices.

In Muea the teacher because of adultery

In Betonde 15 because of drinking and fornication.

Even to-day most of the cases come under Discipline because of adultery. A disturbing fact is that most of those who come under Discipline, for the above mentioned reason, are teachers and catechists. For a better understanding of this most strange situation we must know what happens in traditional society in cases of adultery. Radcliffe-Brown writing on important aspects of legal marriage says that one aspect is "that it gives the husband and his kin certain rights in relation to his wife and the children she bears. The rights so acquired are different in different systems (of kinship). Some of these are rights of the husband to the performance of duties by the wife (rights in personam) and he accepts corresponding duties towards her. He has, for example, rights to the services of his wife in his household. But the husband usually also acquires rights in rem over his wife. If anyone kills or injures her, or commits adultery with her, he may claim to be indemnified for the injury to his rights."¹ This exactly describes the position in traditional Cameroonian society. Therefore a man who commits adultery has to pay damages to the woman's husband. Often such cases come up in native courts. Now in case of teachers or catechists they are looked at as employees of the Church or the Mission and therefore excessive demands are made as damages with the

1) African Systems of Kinship and Marriage: p. 50.

threat to report them to the Church authorities in case they refused to pay. Not only Pagans but also Christians report them for such reasons whereas other cases of adultery are rarely reported to the session for inquiry.

The following is a copy of an accusation of adultery against a teacher. It may be taken as a good illustration of what was said above:¹

"A Serious Misdemeanour."

1. On Tuesday, (date), Mrs. X who is a suckling mother, left the house at about 4 p.m. and did not return home until about 8 p.m. During this period of about 4 hours the young baby of about 15 months was left to starve.
2. Again on Wednesday, (date), Mrs. X left our house and the baby at about 5.30 p.m. and did not return home until 10.5 p.m. During this period of about 4 hrs. 35 minutes the wailing and screaming baby was left to starve. The mother herself did not eat her supper, and surely her breasts contained not enough milk to give the baby sufficient feed during the night.
3. On inquiry, she, Mrs. X, told me that Mr. Y, the Headmaster of ZZZ School, detained her in his house at the Hausa Quarters (Kumba) for the two odd times she had been absent from home.
4. After further inquiry, she revealed that Mr. Y invited her and another friend of hers to his house at the Hausa Quarters. After entertaining them with two bottles of beer, he Mr. Y requested Mrs. X for a love affair.

1) The husband of Mrs. X was known to the author as a man of good character and as a faithful Christian.

Being under influence of alcohol, Mrs. X agreed and a promise was fixed for them to meet in the same house the following day.

5. On Wednesday Mrs. X left home about 5.30 p.m. and went to Mr. Y's house at the Hausa Quarters in pursuit of their previous promise. Her friend W accompanied her.

Mr. Y first entertained them with a bottle of beer, and they drank it. W, the friend of Mrs. X, was left in a waiting place, while Mr. Y and Mrs. X held an exclusive conversation. Mr. X requested my wife, Mrs. X, for a physical relation. She told him that she is a suckling mother. Y contended that he was going to manage it. He then produced a pound note (£1) and offered it to her. This was a sufficient inducement. She accepted the money, and yielded herself to him.

Phases of the Case

1. Departmental - a clear act of misconduct which will undoubtedly result in a breach of matrimonial harmony in our home¹.
11. Legal - (a) Damages - endangered the health of my baby by being the cause of the baby being starved for 4 hrs. on (date), and another 4 hrs. 35 min. on the (date).
 (b) A sexual relation with a suckling mother is an atrocity.²
 (c) Rape - by inducement:- money and drink offered before the action; also he said, "I will manage it, although you are a suckling mother."
111. Civil:- Adultery

sgd. by X's husband"

-
- 1) A demand of divorce was presented to the Church authorities soon after.
 - 2) We remember that a mother is to abstain from sexual relations during the time of lactation.

Apart from the cases of adultery there are those of disom or esila¹ which are a grave problem for the Church. Fortunately they are not so numerous. The following example, written by the author, will introduce us to these peculiar difficulties. "One evening I arrived in a plantation where I was to preach and to hold a communion service on the next day. I had just settled down in my quarters when a man accompanied by his wife came to pay me a visit. The husband told me that he came to greet me and to show me his wife and their little child, she was carrying on her back. After we had spoken for a little while, the husband said: 'I think I may attend the Communion Service to-morrow as I am properly married now'? I asked him why he put this question before me and whether he had not been attending the Communion Service lately. After this the following facts came to light.

The man, an engine driver on the plantation railways, had been away from his home town for many years. One day he made an arrangement with a man who lived in a town near the plantation to give his daughter to live with him. As he was not willing to marry her properly (she belonged to another tribe!) according to native customary law, he did not pay marriage payment but only gave some gift to the father, as is customary in such cases. For this reason he was not considered as being properly married and therefore had to be excluded from partaking in the Lord's Supper by the Church². He lived together with this first wife for several years and they had two children.

1) Lesser forms of marriage.

2) We remember that the Church does not acknowledge a customary marriage without the marriage payment being made.

One year ago he made his mind up that he should now get some children of his own. He sent his first wife back to her father and of course the children went with the mother, as he had not paid the marriage payment. Then he went on a visit to his home town from where he brought his second wife for which he had paid marriage payment and to which according to customary law he was properly married. By doing this he had also fulfilled the law of the Church and had to be re-admitted to the Lord's Table."

iii. Polygamy.

As the problem of polygamy has already been treated we are only concerned here with the disciplinary actions of the Church in such cases. First of all it is important to note that the Church, considering the status of the women, "grants membership to women who under the pressure of the present social and economic structure of the country are forced to live in such polygamous unions"¹. On the other hand, as she disapproves of polygamous marriages, she cannot "accept any polygamist as a member of the Church, though realising that this brings hardship on many, particularly on those who married several wives before coming into contact with the Gospel"². Though polygamists cannot remain members of the Church, if they are still adhering to it, they "should be encouraged to take an active part in Church life"³. As in other African Churches polygamy is for the time being one of the greatest wounds on the body of the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons. Too

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- 1) Constitution: par. 87.
 - 2) Ibid: par. 87.
 - 3) Ibid: par. 84.

many men have lost their Church membership for this reason¹.

iv. Church Contributions.

The Finances of the Church as far as they concern us here are dealt with in the Constitution in the following way:

Par. 96. It is the duty and privilege of the Church to provide money required for the purpose of maintaining the ordained and unordained ministry, and it should be the aim of all congregations to contribute not only towards the support of their own work but that of the whole Church, to help their brethern in the time of trouble and to spread the gospel in other places.

Par. 97. The main income of the Church is derived from Church contributions paid by each adult member according to the rate fixed by the General synod in consultation with the District Synods.

These rates of Church contribution were the following in 1959:²

a) Flat rate: Forest Area men 20/- women 12/- per annum.

Grassfield " 16/- " 10/- " "

b) For wage earning members:

Income per annum:	Rate:
£109 - £143	24/-
144 179	30/-
180 239	40/-
240 and above	50/-

1) In 1954 the author counted 509 women of a total of 780 communicant members in the Mamfe Presbytery.

2) Calendar of the Presbyterian Church (Elange Mbu) 1959.

The collection of these contributions should ideally be done by the Church elders with perhaps the help of the catechist. In fact it is so that the great majority of the Church members refuse to pay their contribution until they have to appear before the pastor for the preparation of the communion service. It is not so that poor people are forced to pay their contribution. Members in our area should be able to pay their amount without difficulty. So they appear before the pastor who is to admit them to the Lord's Table and most of the Christians pay their contribution only under the threat of being refused admittance to the communion service. There are in fact Christians who have to be refused communion because of their unwillingness to pay their contribution. It is clear that this whole situation fosters the feeling that in paying the contribution one buys the communion elements. Many synod meetings have dealt with this problem, and again and again decided that the contribution should be paid to the elders and should have nothing to do with the communion service and the coming of the pastor to the congregation, but with not much success.

The other grave and much discussed problem is of course whether it is right to discipline a member of the Church by shutting him out from the Lord's Table because he refuses to pay his contribution! The Cameroons Baptist Mission knows no fixed rate of Church contribution but from cases known to the author the financial situation in most of their congregations is rather unhealthy. John V. Taylor¹ gives us an example of the Church in Buganda which shows that similar problems may be encountered in other Churches. He writes: that the Church had

1) The Growth of the Church in Buganda; p. 135.

been short of funds in 1912. "The synod of the following year took note that in West and South Africa every adult Christian was bound to pay some fixed Church dues; no such assessment was imposed in Uganda. They decided that they did not wish to introduce anything that might be interpreted as a religious tax, but proposed the adoption of a scheme of "Church Builders", in which they hoped that all Church members would be enrolled, the senior branch undertaking to pay not less than one rupee per annum to Church funds It was only a matter of time before the buzimbi, or Builder's fund, did in fact become a church due which every adult Christian was expected to pay. People who failed to produce up-to-date receipts for buzimbi have found that a clergyman would not marry them in Church until they could do so; and some who have died without the receipts among their papers have been refused Christian burial".

The question whether it is right to discipline a member for not paying his contribution or not can be answered in this way; that somebody who does not understand why he should pay the contribution, has also failed to understand what the Church, including the Lord's Supper, is. The sore point is only that these cases instead of being treated as a question of the cure of soul are handled as if they were court cases.

4. Tribal Ethics and Church Discipline.

When discussing Tribal Ethics we made out that its main interests are the regulation and good order of the community regarding its continuity. Or in other words, the strengthening of the vital powers and their maintenance. And we further know that good and evil are logically derived from their ontology. Anything that is of service

to the strengthening or maintenance of the vital powers is good; anything that impoverishes or destroys them is evil. The behaviour of the individual is therefore judged upon whether it conforms with the aims of the community or not!

When discussing the peculiar problems of congregations in urban areas we mentioned the role the tribal unions played in tying their members to their tribal homes. But these tribal unions are quite often more than a rope tying their members together in a tribal brotherhood. They are, as the following example from the constitution of the Mbang¹ Development Association² clearly shows, an adaption of the tribal system to the needs of this changing society. They therefore usually call themselves development or improvement unions.

Constitution

Rules and Bye-Laws of the

Mbang Development Association

Title and Office

Rule 1.

(a) The name of the Association shall be "The Mbang Development Association".

(b) The registered office shall be at Fotabe³ or such other places as may be decided upon by the Annual Conference of the Association.

(c) This Association is not a political party.

Rule 11.

Aims and Objects

(a) The aims and objects of the Association shall be as follows:-

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- 1) Mbang is a tribal area in Mamfe Division.
 - 2) Some of the features and aims of the Secret Societies are surely returning in these Associations.
 - 3) Fotabe is a town in the tribal area.

To secure the complete Organisation in the Association of all the true nationals of Mbang in the Southern Cameroons.

(b) To serve as the vigorous conscious organisational vanguard for removing all forms of oppression and for the establishment of mutual understanding among the chiefs and the people and also the Government.

(c) To secure and maintain the complete unity of the chiefs of Mbang and the people.

(d) To assist and facilitate in any way possible the realization of a united Mbang.

(e) To support any Government of the day in the Southern Cameroons and to call upon the Government for assistance when the Association deems it expedient.

(f) To see to the construction of road and bridges with steel irons from Fotabe via Ntenmbang to Eyang¹.

(g) To regulate the refulations and to settle disputes between Chiefs and subjects and between one member and another by amicable agreement wherever possible.

(h) To provide for members any or all the following benefits:

(1) Relief in sickness, accident, disablements and distress.

(11) Funeral expenses if any.

1) Where it joins the main road Kumba - Mamfe.

(111) Legal advice and legal assistance where necessary in connection with their organisation.

(i) To see to modify our customs.

(j) The promotion of Legislation in the interest of the Association.

(k) Generally to promote the material, social, economical and educational welfare of the members in any lawful manner which the Annual Conference may from time to time deem expedient. And also to award scholarships to promising sons and daughters of Mbang for secondary education.

Rule 111. Membership.

(a) The Association is open to all sons and daughters of Mbang at home and abroad.

(b) The entrance fee shall be five shillings per man and one shilling per woman. The monthly dues shall be sixpence per man and threepence per woman.

We see that this union tries, in the same way as the traditional tribal system, to secure and to maintain the complete unity of the tribe (Rule 11.c). The fact that interests us in this connection is, that as assistance is only provided for the tribal brother, good and evil lose their value outside the tribal bonds. For example, in spite of the Constitution of the Mbang Development Association's assent "to support any Government of the day in the Southern Cameroons," for the common man the rules and regulations of his tribe are the only valid ones for him. Therefore

to serve a prison sentence in Her Majesty's Prison, for whatever offence, has usually no consequence for the delinquent in his tribal home. On the contrary cases are known to the author, where festivals were organised to receive such ex-prisoners back in their tribal homes.

The reader may have been astonished to see that, when discussing the practical problems of Church Discipline, we only dealt with four points, namely: taking part in Pagan Religious Activities, Adultery, Polygamy and Church Contribution. The four of them pose new ethical problems for a man becoming a Christian. All the other points of ethical behaviour are dealt with in the traditional way. It rarely ever happens that a Church member is disciplined for something not contained in the four points mentioned above. The following example illustrates this: A Church elder, who was a member of the General Synod, was sentenced by a Magistrate Court to pay a substantial fine for smuggling and dispensing forbidden drugs. Everybody felt sorry with him that he had to pay such^a high fine, but nobody ever queried whether such a man was still to be tolerated as a Church elder or as a member of the Church's highest ruling body.

Par. 29. Nationalism and the Presbyterian Church

1. Political Development.

Nationalism in the Southern Cameroons started to become a powerful movement only after the Second World War. Apart from a few intellectuals, it was spread mainly by Cameroonian ex-soldiers who had seen a good deal of the world and who, after all, felt that it was high time that they should govern their own country.

What Dr. Marcel Bebey-Eyidi, a Franch Cameroonian medical practit-

tioner said in a paper read before the All-Africa Church Conference certainly also holds good for the majority of the Nigerian and Cameroonian Ex-Soldiers.¹ He said: "The part played by the colonial nationals in the war effort, on the field of battle as well as in production activities at the rear, was unquestionably the first sign of our political awakening.

It is true that black and yellow troops also took part in great numbers in the world war of 1914-18, but the two situations are not at all comparable. While in the earlier war the European mother countries remained untouched or only partially occupied, this time the whole of western Europe, with the exception of Great Britain and the Iberian peninsula, was invaded and conquered by Hitler. Still more serious, the invasion was not limited to military occupation and the economic pillage which followed. It set in motion a crisis of conscience which put what is called Western civilisation in danger.

It was then that the blacks emerged from the bush, often with bare feet, to enroll themselves voluntarily in the Free French troops of General de Gaulle. They marched side by side with their white masters. They saw them suffer from hunger and thirst like themselves, wounded or killed like themselves. They crossed lands inhabited by other white men and realised that there were also, as among blacks, white men who were wretched and poverty-stricken. They were welcomed with open arms by French families and wondered if this was really the same white race they had seen represented in the colonies.

1) The Development of Political Consciousness in Africa and the Churches' Responsibility. In Background Information; March 1959, No. 19: p. 1-9.

But above all, they had the feeling of being the liberators of their masters who had in turn been dominated by other masters, and nothing could take this feeling away from them. These black men, illiterate and untutored, full of an ingrained inferiority complex, came back three or four years later transformed, taught by experience, rid of their inferiority complex, regarding their former masters certainly not as equals but simply as men more privileged than the blacks, but nonetheless just as much men. They did not stir up revolt or secession in the villages, but they told their astounded brothers what they had seen and done, demonstrating conclusively that men are the same all over the world.

Thus, and often without intending to do so, the former combatants contributed greatly to the development of a political consciousness and the political awakening of their compatriots".

Further to this nationalistic feelings were raised from Eastern Nigeria, which was more advanced than the Cameroons. As we will remember, the two provinces (Cameroons and Bamenda Province) formed up to 1954 part of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. "But although the Southern Cameroons has, from the day that it came under British administration, had close contacts with the Eastern Region of Nigeria, basic ethnical differences and a different historical background have fostered a desire for separation and existence as a separate entity. This desire became so strong that at the London Constitutional Conference of 1954 Her Majesty's Government agreed that the Southern Cameroons should separate from the Eastern Region and enjoy a limited degree of self-government within the Federation of Nigeria¹". The

1) Introducing the Southern Cameroons: p. 23-24.

elections to the Eastern Region House of Assembly were won under the slogan "away from the Eastern Region" by the Kamerun National Congress¹ (K.N.C.) against the government party of the Eastern Region, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.). The latter claimed that the Cameroons should remain with the East. This was the first step, the second one was to follow in 1959. Since "the N.P.C.² decided to ask for self-government for the Northern Region in 1959 and to join the other parties in pressing for independence for Nigeria in 1960"³, the question for the Cameroonians, whether they should join into an independent Nigeria or not, was pressing for an answer.

The alternative to joining in with an independent Nigeria was the reunification of the two Cameroons⁴. There was a strong political party in the Cameroons under French trusteeship, the Union des Populations Camerounaises (U.P.C.) which very strongly favoured the reunification, but it was declared illegal in both territories because of its use of terrorist methods and its alleged communist leadership. The whole population was divided over this question.

At the beginning of 1959 in the elections to the Cameroons House of Assembly the Government Party, an alliance of K.N.C. and K.P.P. (Kamerun People's Party) held that the Cameroons should join in with the Federation of Nigeria, whereas the Opposition Party K.N.D.P.

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- 1) It is interesting to note that the three major political parties, K.N.C., K.P.P., K.N.D.P. all use the name Kamerun in the German spelling.
 - 2) Northern People's Congress; Government Party of the Northern Region of Nigeria.
 - 3) Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the fears of Minorities and the means of allaying them; p. 3.
 - 4) The French Cameroons are granted independence in 1960 as well.

(Kamerun National Democratic Party) won the elections with its policy of reunification with the other part of the Cameroons now under French Trusteeship. Everybody was now expecting the new Government in power to take steps to introduce this reunification. But apart of some Government Ministers visiting Yaounde¹ not much was done.

Meanwhile the political desintegration in the French Cameroons is progressing and there were riots all over the country. What the result of a plebiscite, which is to be held under the supervision of the United Nations, will be, is difficult to make out. What interests us more is that feelings are not so much stamped by nationalistic emotion as this is the case in other parts of Africa. It is not our task to investigate whether the reunification of the two Cameroons would be preferable to remaining in the Federation of Nigeria. What interests us most in this political evolution, is its temper. Compared with other countries under a Colonial Government the political development of the last few years has been a fast running one in comparison with the technical and economic advances of the country. (Why this technical and economic development started rather late, in comparison with the neighbours-French Cameroons and Calabar is also not our concern here.) Already the new Constitution of 1954 gave the territory an Executive Council of 7 members and a House of Assembly of 24 members which had the same legislative powers as a self-governing Region. The Commissioner of the Cameroons was responsible to the Governor-General of the Federation of Nigeria "for the administration of the territory and acted in accordance with such general or specific directions as the Governor-General might give him. These changes paved the way for further

1) Capital of the French Cameroons.

advance and as a result of decisions reached at the London Constitutional Conference of 1957, a new Constitution for the Southern Cameroons was introduced on May 15th, 1958, which has brought into being the form of Government that exists to-day. There is now provision for an enlarged House of Assembly consisting of 26 elected members, 3 ex-officio members, 2 special members and a Speaker. New electoral regulations provide that members are to be elected by universal adult suffrage". "The Executive Council now consists of 5 unofficial members as against 3 ex-officio members, and has an unofficial majority. The Commissioner continues to preside but his reserved powers are now only equivalent to those of Governors of non-self-governing regions, and the Council is the principal instrument of policy for the Southern Cameroons. The country has now a Premier and four Ministers, who are charged with responsibilities by the Commissioner, and control the Departments of Government which are provided for in the Southern Cameroons estimates". "The Governor-General remains responsible to Her Majesty's Government for matters within the competence of the Southern Cameroons Government and in discharging his responsibilities is now styled the High Commissioner for the Southern Cameroons. The Commissioner of the Cameroons continues to be responsible to the High Commissioner".¹

With all this we see that the political evolution has already gone a good way and that tutelage and paternalism have disappeared.

1) Introducing the Southern Cameroons: p. 24.

In fact nationalists have very little to complain about this side of the development. But there is another side where feelings are running high and that is the problem of Cameroonisation. By this is meant the handing over to Cameroonians of senior service posts at present held by Europeans. We have already said that political development is going ahead at such a speed, that an organic development also regards the personal is impossible. This applies to nearly all the Government Departments, as much as to the Trading Firms and Plantations and last but not least to the Churches¹. All this shows that education in general and higher and technical education in particular have been neglected for far too long a time. Most of the friction between "Blacks" and "Whites" has its origin in this problem of Cameroonisation; because on the one hand there are Europeans who do not want to give way to Africans and on the other hand there are too many Africans who think themselves able to do a job without being qualified to do it.

2. Church and Nation

It is clear that the Church, being made up of members who are at the same time members of a political community, is not living her life in a sterile atmosphere but in the contrary is affected by all those developments which take place in the political, social and economic field of this community. We said before that we thought it wise that the Mission made the Church stand on her own feet before political independence was being granted to the country. The following article, commenting the birth of the Presbyterian Church, will be well understood

1) It may be of interest to know that the Roman Catholic Mission had in 1958: 88 European Priests and Sisters, against 5 African Priests, 6 African Sisters and seven African Brothers. (Introducing the Southern Cameroons; p. 90).

against the background given above, and is in its way an interesting statement even if it contains mistakes and does not give full justice to the actual situation:¹

"The Christian Missions"

I was delighted to read the recent announcement concerning a new church constitution which the Basel Mission in Southern Cameroons proposes to introduce.

Under it, the Basel Mission promises to abandon its traditional aversion to devolving responsibility to African priests and also promises to do all in its power to train Cameroonians abroad for executive posts in the priesthood.

The announcement is welcome even if it is a belated atonement for the grievous neglect which church work in the territory has suffered at the hands of the Christian Missions.

It is a shame that after a whole half century of missionary activity in the territory, white priests still find it convenient to make themselves "indispensable" while their counterparts in Nigeria have done so well in training Nigerians that they could say with the holy prophet: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen the salvation which Thou has prepared before the face of all Thy people"

Yes, white Missionaries in Nigeria are completing their assignment. Their achievement ought to be a source of inspiration to white missionaries in the Cameroons."

What is the Church's responsibility towards the State? Before we shall try to answer this question, let us briefly enquire into the

1) Daily Times; September 25th 1957. p. 6.

position the Basel Missionaries held in respect to the State in the Cameroons. One of the reasons why the English Baptist Mission handed her work over to the Basel Mission was because she was unwilling to continue her work in a country that had just come under German domination. The Basel Mission, which had her missionaries mostly coming from Germany and from Switzerland, took over. Up to 1914 we therefore had a German Government and a German majority among the missionaries. After 1922 the first missionaries who came back to the Cameroons, now under the British Government, were Swiss. But soon after the German missionaries were allowed back to the Cameroons, some of them who had even been there before 1914. Up to 1939 all the tensions between Britain and Germany may be followed in the relationship between Mission and Government in the Cameroons. It was only after the Germans had been interned that a better relationship between the Swiss missionaries, who had remained on the field, and the Government became possible.

The question is now whether this political past has had any impact on the Presbyterian Church's position towards the State? We may say luckily enough no. In general the Christians, particularly the younger, educated, ones are politically alive. This statement may be underlined by the facts that already two pastors of our Church, the Rev. Chi Kangsen and the Rev. Ando-Seh were members of the executive of the Southern Cameroons Government and that a number of Christians are members of the House of Assembly.

We have asked two Church members, whom we shall call Peter and Paul, to answer us the following questions:

1. What will the legal position of our Church in the new State be?
2. Will the Church have any influence on the development and policy of the country? If yes, in which way?
3. What is the Christians position towards the State? Should he join in the upbuilding of it?
4. Should a Christian do everything the State orders him to?

Peter:

1. "The Cameroons is moving fast towards the status of an autonomous State perhaps within the British Common Wealth of Nations and the time is no longer far distant when this her birth-right will be conceded her. Modern Statesmen and Religionists have learnt much from past history. They have learnt and must continue to learn to avoid the mistakes which were made at the time when men did not define clearly the relationship between the Church and the State. The most fatal of these mistakes in English History was when attempts were made in Parliament to legalise the Anglican Church and to bring about the uniformity of the Church. This gave birth to much religious intolerance and dissension of the highest order. The result was that there were many civil wars and some of the dissenters like the Pilgrim Fathers left England for America where they would be free to worship God in the way they liked.

The future Cameroons State will not accommodate this error. Our Church will continue to enjoy the status it now enjoys harmoniously - namely - freedom of worship. Freedom of worship is almost one of the first concessions a government grants the governed. With this assurance, I am sure that our Church will grow healthily and breathe freely

in an atmosphere of tolerance and on the other hand the attitude of the Cameroons State towards the different Churches in general and ours in particular will be largely influenced by our Church's attitude towards the State.

2. The Church will have this influence directly and indirectly. The various political parties that form the different Governments at different stages of a Nations growth shout 'One God' as one of their slogans. During electioneering campaigns emphasis is always laid on voting only for the believers in Jesus. A majority of the successful candidates is always made up of men belonging to the various Churches of God. Under such normal circumstances, the Fear of the Lord will ultimately form the foundation on which the policy of the Government will be based and such a Government becomes stable and endures all the storms and stresses of the times without collapsing. The Christian spirit will abound and guide them during their parliamentary debates and in other spheres of State-duties. This is the indirect influence of the Church on the State. Directly, the Church will open schools which will develop the citizens morally, mentally and physically and above all, the Church's prayers and preachings will invite God's guidance and peace which will give birth to a healthy Country. This means that such a country will have a sound policy and an all-round development.

3. The Christian's position towards the State is clear. In a may-be or would-be Cameroons State the Christian will be part and parcel of the State all being under the canopy of God's protecting wings. He has to participate actively in the affairs of the State and obey both the

State and Christian Laws Therefore a Christian who enjoys the respect of being tolerant and peace-loving, must regard it his duty not to use his position (if he happens to be a legislator) to bring undue influence to bear on the Government. The Christian must forget religious differences, he must avoid the mistake of India and Pakistan and work conscientiously as a member of the State for the welfare of all the members of the State.

4. Jesus Christ, the head of the Christian Church, had answered this question in advance for us when he said, Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and give unto God what belongs to God". The Christian can best understand this by flashing his mind back to the good old Roman days that came after the death of Christ. The subsequent Apostles were asked by the Roman authorities to give up Christianity but they refused and triumphed at last even after threats, mass imprisonment, persecution etc. had been employed as weapons to check its rapid spread. But they honourably did their duties to God and the State. The modern Christian should do likewise."

Paul:

1. "The future is all unknown, consequently, it is rather doubtful at the moment to ascertain the legal position of our Church in the Cameroons in the near future. Since the British Government respects all forms of religions, and above all recognises God as the ultimate controller of the universe, there is all likelihood that our politicians who seem to learn much of her great democratic principles may also place our Church as an important instrument in the moulding of Christ-like Characters in our citizens. If therefore our Church does not

interfere with the political aspirations of the Cameroonians, but stands only on the grounds of evangelising her people, and if our country is led by men of exceptional character and determined purpose, then the legal position of our Church in the new State may be well secured.

2. Yes, to some extent. The Church as a body may have some influence on the social development of the country, but may have nothing to do with the governmental policy of the country. By the opening of schools, maternity homes, hospitals etc. she may be able to bring many souls to Christ. With such aims in view, I believe the New State may support and possibly finance such social developments.

3. Every group of people united into a State, has three characteristics. Firstly, the group is organised; secondly it is political and thirdly it is regulated or ordered by laws which all the citizens must obey. The position of the Christian towards the State is therefore clear in that he also as a citizen of the State is a member of the State and should join in the up building of it. At Church, at School, in most Christian gatherings the doctrine of Christ teaches him the importance of good citizenship and this I hope would be a fair chance of his showing others the need for unity and brotherly love.

4. Except where the orders of the state are contrary to the teachings of Christ, a Christian, (who is also a citizen of the State) should do everything the State orders him to do. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's"

These statements of two Cameroonian elementary teachers, who have never been away from West Africa, show that they have quite a good understanding of the Church's place and function in the State. And indeed many of our Church members take an active part in political life. It will, of course, need some time until the political consciousness becomes aware of the needs of the whole nation. We should never forget that these national units in Africa are the creation of Europeans; they are the tribes which the colonial powers had bound together under one administration. From what we know about the strength of tribal ties we can imagine that it is not to be taken as a matter of course that a Mukwiri of Victoria Division should defend the interests of a Munyangi in Mamfe Division. In this sense the Church has been pioneering in fostering these mutual responsibilities in that the richer Presbyteries have had to help the poorer ones, or in that one Presbytery had to provide staff for another one which was short. At the time when the Basel Mission Church became the Presbyterian Church we were wondering whether this would make any difference regards the willingness of Lay-Christians to take over charges and responsibilities in the Church. It is clear that the missionaries lost no opportunity to remind Church members that the responsibility was now all their own and that they should take a more active part in Church life. Certainly the new situation has had its influence and in some areas led to great efforts, mainly in the financial domain. The word patriotism came up and was even used in Church. An appeal of Rev. A. Su, the Secretary of the General Synod, to young people to go to the Catechist Training Institution is a good example of this.

He writes:¹ "The word "patriotism" is a very good and useful word. It is a word heard almost daily from the mouth of many people and especially young people. The word conveys the idea of seeking to "preserve its own", it may be seeking to preserve the life of the group such as the family, the tribe or the nation. For Christians the word can be used in the same sense to express the idea of seeking to preserve the continuity of the life of the Church. Have we ever thought of such a thing like "Christian Patriotism"? Why not? Does Christian Youth in the Southern Cameroons have a patriotic feeling towards the Church to which they belong in order to work for the continuation of the life of the Church of Christ?

The Gospel has been brought to us by the Christian Youth of other lands. Here is the Church among us, a Church to which we belong. What do we think about it? Have we realised that as the Youth of the Church we ought to do something, our own share of responsibility in the service of the Church? Does the call of God not come to us to serve Him in proclaiming the Gospel? When God calls a person to do something for Him He expects the person to obey.

You who read these lines belong to the Christian Youth to whom the call of God comes, You have had your education in a Christian school or institution. You belong to the Church of God. He wants to use you as a means of conveying the understanding of the Gospel of Salvation to others. Will you rather choose to think only of your personal interest and allow others to continue in their ignorance of God's love? You have

1) Messenger; Organ of the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons: October 1959, No. 10.

been reading about the Seminary where they train those who go out to evangelise the country for Christ. It needs young Christian patriots like you, to serve in the continuation of the life of the Church. When God called young Samuel he said, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth". And when He asked "Whom shall we send"? the young prophet Isaiah said, "Here am I, send me". What is your answer to God's call which comes to you to serve Him in proclaiming the Gospel of salvation to your own countrymen?"

The General Synod¹ decided that a "Presbyterian Church Day" should be observed on the 13th November of every year. For it was on the 13th November 1957 that the new constitution of the Church in the Cameroons was adopted. The November issue of the Church paper (Messenger) is full of articles, all written by Cameroonians, about the significance of this Presbyterian Church Day. Quotations from some of the articles will give us an impression of how much this new status of the Church is pressing its members to take up their responsibility.

E.E. Otudor writes: "The Presbyterian Church shall observe this day for the first time on Friday, the 13th November, 1959. On this day the Church should render thanks to Almighty God for the coming of the Gospel to this country and for continuous sustenance, yet there is still much room for improvement daily. We should also express our deepest gratitude to the Basel Mission Authority who brought the Gospel here and led us well to become independent. The Church as a living one should device means and ways of evangelising those in all the villages

1) General Synod meeting in Mamfe; minutes April 1959.

which have not yet received the word of God. Particular attention should be paid to Evangelistic Work on the day. Collections that will be realised on the day should best be used in evangelising the areas untouched".

R.M. Ntoko, after giving a short sketch of the history of the Church, writes: "But now the turning point has come. Our Basel Mission Church in the Cameroons has grown up to be independent, and as we all know, it is now called the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons. On the 13th November this year we shall celebrate its second anniversary. For true lovers of this country, this is a challenge to us. This is the time we can prove to the world that the seeds of Christ sown in our hearts have not fallen on stony ground but on fertile soil (Lk 8, 4-15) - We shall know them by their works. This is the time we also can make new ventures for expansion work in the Overside¹ and the unfortunate areas where the Gospel of Christ has not reached. This is the time we can offer more generously for the work of God".

J.F. Mancho, comparing the Church Day with the National Day, writes: "Quite unlike the celebration of the National Day, during which school children and interested citizens perform sports and receive prizes, listen to great speeches made by the Ruling Authorities, all followers of Christ shall attend Church services, visit the sick, do open air evangelisation, in fact help to bring the good tidings to as many people as possible". Then he goes on writing about the Overside: "Our Church

1) Overside is the untouched area of the Mamfe Division.
See Map No. 3.

has determined to listen to that call ringing through the dense forest, and the souls yelling and yawning for the "Bread of Life", the "Word of God", which we have received in abundance. Shall we grow weary in the work of love and allow these souls to perish? Shall we resign our jobs and march to the Overside so as to spread the Gospel there? We can from a distance do wonders by way of prayer and free donations in kind and in cash. This Church is therefore appealing to all brethren more especially to those who are blessed to possess some money from any good source to donate very cheerfully and substantially on this 13th day of November, 1959. Your donations will help to send a preacher to this part of the country in 1960. Please remember that there will be brethren who shall desert their homes and relations, their land of corn and wine, for the sake of these people. Let us do our bit by giving them mere subsistence by way of some sort of real free-will offering, in cash or in kind, on this 13th day of November, 1959".

And as the last quotation, a few words out of Rev. A. Su's article: "The present position of the Church implies much more work and real responsibility. Each member of this Church has to recognise and understand what self-responsibility means. It just means hard work in carrying the Gospel to others who have not heard it before, and to give freely and willingly for the work of the Church. As this Church has passed through its missionary-stage and has become self-responsible, it should open up its own Mission-fields in order to fulfil her calling".

These are new words from Cameroonians! Because up to now it was usually the missionaries who were pressing for missionary actions of the Church; and it was usually very hard work to convince a Presbyterian

Synod to send catechists and evangelists into an untouched area. But it seems that with the "independence" of the Church not only the self-consciousness but also the self-responsibility is growing. It is certainly very enjoyable to see how the Church gradually becomes aware of its responsibility towards her surrounding. From the statements of Peter and Paul we see that both of them do realise that the Church has to have an impact on the State, through preaching, prayers and through "schools which will develop the citizens morally, mentally and physically" (Peter) on the one hand, and through the individual Christian who as a citizen of the State "should join in the up building of it" on the other hand (Paul). "At Church, at School, in most Christian gatherings the doctrine of Christ teaches him (the citizen) the importance of good citizenship and this I hope would be a fair chance of his showing others the need for unity and brotherly love" (Paul).

Now let us for a moment review these various possibilities of Christian action: Preaching, Prayer, Schools, Hospitals and Maternity Homes; are these not exactly the forms of worship and institutions imported by the European missionaries into Africa? Let us also remember that when discussing the problems of "Tribal Ethics and Church Discipline", we established that Church Discipline in the Cameroons usually only dealt with four points: "Pagan Religious Activities", "Adultery", "Polygamy" and "Church Contributions". And that the four of them were new elements of ethics for a man becoming a Christian.

We will also remember how much the tribal structure is having a hold on the individual and how it is even trying to adapt itself to the

new situation. But there is a third agent, which we usually call the impact of "Western Civilisation", with its various branches as: Government Authority, Party Politics, Courts and Prisons, Administration, Labour Legislation, Education, Hygiene, Trade with its Western Money-Economy and Technical Development, Trade Unions and Strikes, to name only the major ones. Seeing the ever increasing impact of this third agent, we must now re-ask the question, as to what the Churches' responsibility towards State and people is? Is the Church able to give the necessary guidance to her members who are involved in Politics, Trade, Administration? As we have seen, the Church members are usually politically alive and we think that J.V. Taylor's fears that a separation of religion and society, which would as he rightly states, be clean contrary to all African tradition and feeling, will to a lesser degree apply to the West-African situation.¹

But the problem lies somewhere else. The Problems in which Africa² is involved to-day, through this third agent, are so revolutionary that

- 1) He writes: "It would be a disaster for Africa at this time if those who are politically aware, and actively engaged in shaping their society, begin to drift away from the Church, in which so many of them have grown up, feeling that it is unsympathetic and condemnatory in its attitude towards their endeavours. There is in many countries a danger of this happening to an extent unparalleled even in Europe. But such a separation of religion and society would be clean contrary to all African tradition and feeling. Here religion has always been thought of as permeating and supporting all the economic and social activities of men, and especially as the source of the rulers' guidance and strength". Christianity and Politics in Africa: p. 19-20.
- 2) This applies of course to all the countries which are in this rapid social change situation.

they have no parallel in history. The reader may say; yes but we had revolutions in Europe too! It is certainly true that revolutions have brought about great changes in the western world throughout the centuries. Think of the Reformation, the French Revolution, Communism, the Atomic Age. But there is one great and important difference; Luther and Calvin, Voltaire and Rousseau, Marx and Engels, Curie and Einstein, they all grew out of this western civilisation. Even if their thoughts brought about Revolutions, they still grew out of their surrounding which kept them in an organic continuity with our common western past. And this our common western past is a period of many centuries during which the life of the community and of the individual, was deeply permeated by Christianity in its various forms. Christianity, whether we like it or not, provided the basis on which those revolutions mentioned above became possible. And D.L. Hamm¹ rightly remarks that "a considerable number of scholars have been at pains to point out to modern western man that he is not as free from religion as he had thought. Dr. Tawney's study, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, affords a reminder that Protestant ethics were of prime importance in moulding the economic life of modern Europe and America. It indicates how capitalism has as its base certain unacknowledged religious ideas derived from Christianity which, if lost, spell disaster".²

If these several aspects and branches of our own culture can only be understood in the light of our past, how have they then presented

1) Western Culture and Philippine Life: p. 387.

2) See also: Max Weber: Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus. Ernst Troeltsch: Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirchen.

themselves to people who had no historical link with it whatsoever? Again Hamm's statement is of interest to us. He says¹: "Cultures can present themselves to their neighbours, in the period of their growth, as cultural wholes or integrated ways of life. In stages of disintegration, the cultural elements travel by themselves.

Dr. Toynbee's analysis² of this, on which the following is based, is relevant to our purpose. The most easily detachable 'flake' of a culture is its economic side, where man exerts his power over non-human nature; and the second most easily detachable flake is political, where man exerts his power over his fellow-human beings. In the cultural core which remains after these have been removed, there may be distinguished three further layers of flakes, the linguistic, the intellectual and the artistic, which, if they be removed, bare the religious nucleus. When cultures collide, an assaulted culture accepts new elements in this order, that is, in the order of the ease of flaking".

As Westerners we know something about the state of disintegration of our own culture, and whether we agree with Toynbee's thesis in principle or not, we have seen how these flakes of our own culture have been introduced and in many cases superimposed to peoples who had no common historical bases with us. And it is certainly also true that because of this state of disintegration of our own culture the various cultural flakes have been detached from the cultural whole and travelled by themselves.

And this leads us to the crucial point, namely that we have in

1) Ibid; p. 388-389.

2) A Study of History: Vlll; p. 498-499.

our situation three powers, the traditional society, the Christian Church and the secularised flakes of western culture, which are extremely difficult to reconcile. Toynbee is surely correct when he says that the most easily detachable flake of a culture is its economic side, where man exerts his power over non-human nature. As the assaulted culture accepts these secularised flakes in the order of the ease of flaking, it is this side of our western culture which impresses Africans most. But, and this is most important, as these flakes travel on their own, they are also accepted without their ethical bedding in which they grew up. Seen from this fact, what is the difference, from an African point of view, whether this economic and technical development is controlled from New York, London or Moscow, as long as he believes that it comes to him without its bedding? What applies to the economic flake is to some extent also applicable to the political flake! This revolutionary situation poses ethical problems which are hard to solve, and in spite of the fact that the Christians are in general politically interested, it remains to be said that they are dangerously unprepared for this difficult task. Seen from this point Taylor's criticism is certainly right when he says: that "there are many African Christians who have for a long time understood that the God of the Bible is the God of politics also. Yet it remains true that the Church as a whole is not exercising the influence on the changing scene of African affairs which is required of her."¹

1) Christianity and Politics in Africa: p. 9.

CHAPTER 7.

Summary and Conclusion.

In our introduction to part two we said that it is the aim of this thesis to show and to examine, at least in part, the impact of the traditional Weltanschauung on the Natives' understanding of the Christian faith and on the practice of the Church. To be able to do this we have had, first of all, to analyse fundamental biblical conceptions and to show the implications God's self disclosure in Jesus Christ has for the individual in particular and for mankind in general. In that man, through Jesus Christ, becomes a new creature his whole life is altered; it is now centred on the fact that Christ is the Lord and that he, through God's Grace has become a member of a new community which is the body of Christ. This gives him a new understanding of self, he is now to take up the Kairos of God in heart, and will, and life; he should now subject himself to the decision that has pleased God and be obedient to it alone.

Against this Christian understanding of self we set the understanding of self among the Heathen and we showed how it is centred on life, i.e. the continuity and well-being of family, lineage and tribe, and how this life is conceived as a cycle including the dead, the living and those to come. The individual and the community he lives in is held together in an all-embracing order aiming at this all-important continuity. This understanding underlies the whole structure of traditional society and creates its own distinctive pattern of behaviour and its peculiar psychology so foreign to the

scientific Western mind. It is clear that this understanding of self not only creates great difficulties for the understanding and acceptance of the biblical message but also is a hindrance to the understanding of the sacraments. Due to their traditional, heathen understanding of history and existence African Christians are in constant danger of misunderstanding the nature of the Church and many of them conceive it as a social institution, analogous to their tribe but endowed with greater power. Through baptism one becomes a member of the Church, through the Lord's Supper and the setting up of the cross the way of the Christian is guaranteed, since all three work ex opere operato.

The new understanding and consciousness of history, which is included in the Kairos of God, creates also a quite new understanding of oneself and community. This becomes the basis for the ethical decision and it puts man in a new situation and calls him to new action in the community of his fellowmen. His life is now directed to do the will of God. The origin of Christian ethics can therefore not be the reality of the world, not the reality of standards and values, but only the reality of God and His revelation in Jesus Christ. Evil or sin, for the Christian, does therefore not consist in isolated sins, nor yet in a perverse basic direction of Character, but it is for him the attempt of man to get along without God, it is a wrong relationship with God which has as its consequence moral errors that are to a greater or less degree shocking.

For the traditional man the ontology is the basis and norm of good and evil. This ontology is centred around all the vital powers which augment or sustain the power of living of the individual and

his kin. From this ontology good and evil are logically derived. Anything that is of service to the strengthening or maintenance of the vital powers is "good," anything that impoverishes or destroys them is "evil." We have seen now this works itself out in the domain of "medicine" and witchcraft. This traditional ethical basis is, if the nature of the Church is misunderstood in the above mentioned way, carried over into the Christian community and is the reason for the strong legalism we find among the Christians; it also makes them misunderstand Church discipline.

Why do they misunderstand the biblical message and with this the nature of the Church? We have asked the question how far the language may present an insuperable problem of communication and came to the conclusion that, in principle, the situation in the Cameroons does not differ from any other part of this world in that single biblical terms will never be understood in any language if they are isolated from their context, and that these terms will only be recreated with the whole biblical message by the Holy Spirit and man's response to it. The situation of the Cameroonian Christian does not differ fundamentally from ours in the so-called Christian countries. We too are in constant danger of misunderstanding and misinterpreting the biblical message. In what we differ from them is that we have a Christian tradition of many centuries behind us which from childhood gives us the pattern for our thinking and action. If we look back into our history we see that the situation of our own ancestors was in no wise different from the one in which the African Christians find themselves today. W. V. Stone, writing on a comparison of the "Dark Ages and Twentieth

Century Africa,"¹ says: "Christianity for the large majority amounted to no more than a renunciation of their old Gods in favour of the Trinity: it had no influence on their morals, and even their relationship with the Spiritual continued to follow the pattern of superstition and magic." Or if we look more closely into the reign of Charlemagne, who is called the father of Europe,² with his aim to build the civitas dei, and see the state of Christendom of those days we begin to realise something of the difficulties in which African Christians are involved. But we do not have to dig back into our past to understand that Christians are always in danger of mixing their Heathen past with their Christian beliefs. Ruth Landes³ who studied the Negroes in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro in 1938 - 39 shows us how much these former slaves, who have been under the teaching of the Roman Church for generations, have carried into their Churches parts of their West African rites and beliefs. And Eduard Renner⁴ writing on the beliefs in spirits and magical practices of the people living in the mountainous country of Uri in Switzerland tells us things which might as well have happened in the Cameroons.

Examples of syncretism can be found everywhere and the Christian Church does well in being aware of its constant danger, and of remembering Paul's word to the Corinthians "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons."⁵ We have seen how much the Roman

-
- 1) Ibid; p. 128.
 - 2) R. Wahl: Karl der Grosse.
 - 3) The City of Women.
 - 4) Goldener Ring Uber Uri.
 - 5) I. Corinthians 10. 21.

Catholic doctrine of the analogia entis, which uses the analogy of natural life to illustrate birth, growth and healing of the supernatural life, comes near to an understanding of the sacraments and a view of the nature of the Church, which many of our Cameroon-ian Christians hold. In fact we believe that the development of the doctrine of the Church in Roman Catholicism, around which all the other dogmata are built up, can be understood as a continuous process of concessions being made by the Roman dogmaticians to the Heathen background out of which we have been called by God through Jesus Christ. Let us remember that in the New Testament the great stress is not laid on a new teaching, a new view of God, a new form of worship, but it is the proclaiming of the event of God's self-disclosure in Jesus Christ, the preaching itself that is the decisive thing, for it brings to pass that for which the prophets of the Old Testament waited. Through the preaching of God's mighty breaking-in this event of God's self-disclosure is brought to its fulfilment and through it the Kingdom of God comes.

It may be said that, unfortunately, until now Christian Theology has remained a foreign subject to Africans which they copy from their Western teachers, the missionaries. But if the biblical message is really to be understood and not just to create a varnish, covering the traditional outlook, then it has to come to an encounter between this traditional life and the Christian Message. K.A. Busia, commenting on the Christian Church in Africa, will be well understood in this connection. He says: "In some respects the influence of the Church is a thin veneer, in other respects the Church as a vehicle of Western culture has made a very pronounced impact on Africa.

What I have to say about the Church as a vehicle of culture may be slightly distasteful to those whose primary interest is the evangelistic work of the Church, but to evaluate in my own country (Ghana) the benefits of the Church and its real influence on society, I would give higher marks to its cultural achievements than to its evangelistic achievements."¹ The failure to come to a better understanding of the Ministry of the ordained and unordained Church-workers and of the laity on the one hand and of the Christian ethics and Church-discipline on the other has its deepest roots in the misunderstanding of the nature of the Church. But let us remember that in principle these are the same difficulties as we meet them in our home Churches. A similar study to this one could also be carried out in Scotland or anywhere else. Faith is never our possession, we receive it daily anew. We are only new creatures and belong to this new community insofar as we are again and again re-created by Christ himself.

To be able to give a helping hand in this encounter between traditional life and the Christian message we must first of all know as much as possible about this traditional outlook which, as we have seen, is not a known system of philosophy but is inherent in the social structure of traditional life. Seen from here it seems to us irresponsible to send missionaries, whether theologians, educationalists or women-workers to Africa without having received a basic training in the findings of Social Anthropology.

1) Africa in Transition; p.3.

Another important lesson is yet to be learned. Missionary enterprise in Africa is so much connected with educational work that we are always in danger of linking up the biblical message with a western, scientific, view of the world. Paul, in the passage quoted above,¹ does not deny the existence of idols and demons but says: "I do not want you to be partners with demons." No learned psychological explanation will help the common African Pagan and Christian to overcome his fears and liaisons to these powers, whose reality and existence is proved to him daily in his community. Only the experience of Christ's redemption in which these powers have been overcome can help him. If we try it the other way round, we are bound to be misunderstood, or better, not understood at all!

The Church is not the only agent which brought about changes in traditional Africa; the other agents, or flakes of Western Culture, have such a telling effect on the traditional society, that they naturally also have a strong effect on thought and practice of the Christian Church.² We have tried to show the impact of these main agents and the individualising effect they have on Africans, mainly the educated ones. On the other hand the grip the traditional society has on the individual is still strong and we could even

1) I. Corinthians 10. 14-22.

2) We should not have part in what Max Gluckman calls rightly "The European failure to realise that Africans and other primitive people are today so deeply involved in our social system that they are moved by the political forces which are at work around us at home." The Institutions of Primitive Society; p. 80.

speak of an adaptation of the tribal system to the modern conditions of life.

It is important to realise that the encounter does not take place between two agents, the traditional society and Christianity, only, but that the third agent, the secularised cultural elements in their various forms being welcomed or superimposed from the Western World, is becoming increasingly important. In the chapters on Home Youth and the Family and on the Presbyterian Church in the Cameroons we have seen how this situation of change, disintegration and searching for new forms is having a very strong impact on the life of the Church.

In our area the traditional family has usually been polygamous and we have seen the many difficulties arising out of this fact in Church life. But we think that the general trend is towards monogamy. Unfortunately monogamy is increasingly becoming a social rather than a spiritual ideal. The younger, educated, woman expects more from her life together with her husband and therefore marriage becomes more exclusive and leaves no room for a second wife. The extended family in the Cameroons has usually been a source of security and stability for the individual as well as for the society. People knew where they and their family had their place in the structure of society and their duties, obligations and privileges were well defined and known. But families begin to move away from their traditional homes following the various opportunities of making their living. By this naturally the small family as we know it in the Western world, comes into being. There may be, as the Report of an International

Ecumenical Study Conference says,¹ "new opportunities in the small family for a richer and fuller family life and for greater individuality, for closer partnership, a fuller intellectual life, higher standards of living and better health. But often before these new heights can be attained, there are strains and difficulties to be overcome. Husband and wife may be drawn further apart, the children may receive less attention, and close relations may be made impossible by the demands of industrial life."

'The home may become more insecure and unstable for all the members of the family."

When discussing the problems of Church discipline we came up against the astonishing fact that usually Christians come under Church discipline for taking part in pagan religious activities, adultery, polygamy and for not paying their church contribution only. All the four points pose new ethical problems for a man becoming a Christian. But all the other points of ethical behaviour are dealt with in the traditional way. This shows us how strong the hold of traditional society still is and at the same time poses the question about the right stand of the Christian Church towards the traditional cultural heritage. We have seen that it is not possible to take some of the tribal practices over into the Christian community, whereas others would not in any case be acceptable. These practices lose their meaning if they are removed out of their traditional context. As shown on the example of the way the traditional African society pays honour to old people and provides for their needs within the family circle. Certainly the Christian community is called upon to care for the old people, but she is not to do it because

1) Dilemmas and Opportunities; p. 21.

this is an old tradition in society, which as we have seen may change, but in obedience to God's commandment of love. On this basis care for our old people again becomes meaningful. This counts not only for our old people but applies to the whole wide field of ethical behaviour. We repeat it again that it is as impossible to think of an evolution of tribal practices into Christian ones as it is to think of an evolution of tribal philosophy into Christian belief. The Christian community, like the individual Christian, is time and again called to find new forms and standards for her life and to have her old ones judged in the light of God's Word and Spirit.

If the impact of traditional Weltanschauung is still strong among the Christians and the nature of the Church is accordingly misunderstood, then it is not astonishing that the traditional structure of society should also have its impact upon Church life. We showed how much the relationship between Pastors and Catechists and Church-elders tends to be one of Chief - Sub-chief - Quarter-head and how strong the influence of tribalism may be in that it causes divisions among Christians and it ties those who go abroad to their traditional home and congregation. If we said above that the impact of traditional life on the Church makes itself strongly felt, then there is included in this statement not only a negative observation but also a positive one. Namely that the Church in all its weakness is living among the people in the Cameroons and has not avoided involvement by insulating itself from society, but

keeps her doors open for everybody and in doing this has not become a self-contained sect, cut off from the community.

Political and technical development are changing the Cameroons and the Church is called to be a guide in all these changes. Does she have men well enough equipped to meet the situation? Much remains to be done in the field of training and evangelism. Men, ordained and unordained, must be trained and provided with the necessary knowledge and spiritual authority to enable them to exercise the influence, which is required of the Church, on the changing scene of Africa. The relation of Christianity to culture and the situation of change is to be carefully rethought in terms of the African situation. Study materials provided by Sociology, Social Anthropology and Religious Science will be of great help. But, above all, clear theological insight will enable us to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials, and help us to build up a new community in which life will be meaningful.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth..... John 16. 13.

Glossary of main Duala Words occurring
in the Text.

		<u>Page</u>
bedimo	ancestor spirits	61, 68, 69, 87, 111, 114, 116, 118.
bema	marriage payment	57, 225.
bonda	to form, create.	77
bwanga	medicine.	100, 101, 102, 103, 184, 200.
dese bedimo	feasting of the ancestors	69
diba	marriage	83, 84, 240.
dibala	offering place	60, 69, 148.
dibua dindene	funeral rites	91, 171, 172.
isango	secret society	72, 79, 80, 178, 183, 184.
kwedi	death.	61, 68, 88, 173.
lemba	witchcraft	95
loba	God	114, 117, 120, 189.
mandem	God	113, 114, 116.
mbia	lineage	54.
mboa	house	61, 63.
modi	moon	76, 77, 193.
mot'a bwanga	medicine man	100, 101.
mot'a ngambi	magician	109
mulemba	witch	95, 192.
mulondedi	man filled with power	97, 98, 100, 101, 170, 200 214.
mulopo	head, mask	72, 111.

mulopo	head, mask	72, 111.
muna	child	54, 88
mundi	town, village	61, 63, 68, 116, 118.
musango	peace	72, 200.
musoso	expiation discussion	70, 145, 164, 200.
mutudu	elder	60, 63, 86, 176, 207, 290.
mwemba	age set	63, 80.
hango	mother, wife	54, 58, 61, 63, 88.
hambe	God	114, 116, 120.
ho kwa	to undergo the ordeal	65, 66, 95, 200.
ho male	to make a covenant	67.
obase	God	113, 114, 116.
sanga	to become white, clean	72, 120, 157, 188, 189.
sango	father	54, 63, 116, 170, 173.
sasa kwedi	funeral rites	89, 172.
songo	grave	90, 145.
topo besa	public discussion	66, 200.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Abbreviations.

<u>Africa:</u>	Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Culture, London.
<u>Afrika und Uebersee:</u>	Folge der Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen - Sprachen, Berlin.
<u>A.M.Z.:</u>	Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift.
<u>Background Information:</u>	Issued by the World Council of Churches Geneva.
<u>E.M.M.:</u>	Evangelisches Missionsmagazin, Basel.
<u>I.R.M.:</u>	International Review of Mission, London.
<u>N.A.M.Z.:</u>	Neue Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift.
<u>S.Jour. of Theol.:</u>	Scottish Journal of Theology, Edinburgh.
<u>R.G.G.:</u>	Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft.
<u>T.W.z.N.T.:</u>	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament. (G. Kittel)

* = Manuscript.

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